ISEKAI

CANCELLER

chapter 11 -20

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“Dwarf” was a race that also existed in the game I was playing.
It was a race different from humans. Their primary characteristics were being short and stout with beards growing on their face, very much like this dwarf shopkeeper.

The game pretty much let you choose whatever race you wanted your Player Character to be.
Dwarfs were not skilled when it came to Magic, but their abilities came from being both strong and dexterous.
Many of them were part of the warrior-class, but quite a few of them also displayed their skills as part of the production-class.

Although their appearance made them look not well suited for fine detailed work, and even though they had large hands, dwarfs were a race whose craftsmanship allowed them to make delicate creations with vivid ornaments.

Additionally, according to the setting they were extremely strict and did not allow slacking off when it came to work huh.
It’s just that their inflexible disposition made them hard to deal with. Another way of putting it was that they were a race who was synonymous with stubbornness.

Nevertheless, I certainly didn’t expect to meet a dwarf in this sort of place.
That’s because, back in the game, almost all of the NPC dwarfs often lived together in villages.

「And so, what’s your business here」

Just like I expected, his greeting wasn’t too friendly. It was as if he only serviced customers when he felt like it. But in any case, he’s looking over at me with an intense stare.
It was like entering a convenience store and having the cashier stare at you with a dissecting gaze.
In a store like that, I doubt many customers would come in to buy meat buns from them.

However——

「The truth is that I've got a few things I want to sell. Is that sort of thing alright with you?」(Hitto)

「Yea. Even if the store's a bit beat up, that sort of thing shouldn't be a problem. If ya want me to buy some things then leave 'em here」

Saying this, he struck the counter with his finger.
As such, I retrieved all of the aforementioned equipment from my Magic Bag and lined them up on the counter.

「I'm gonna go assess these, so wait around here and have a look around」

I replied "I got it" and waited with Melissa for the assessment to finish.

In the meantime we looked around the inside of the store but—— I see, this shop really has some nice goods.
Since there's a place deeper inside that looks like a workshop, this dwarf shop must be doing some blacksmithing as a side-job.

I wasn't particularly well-versed in my knowledge of weapons and armors but, even so, I somehow understood.

Dwarfs were brutally tactless about most things. But when it came to their work, it was first-class. You could say that they handled it worth earnest enthusiasm.
The store was worn-down but I could very much understand that every single piece of equipment laid out were all magnificent items.

That is to say, numerous weapons were crafted while grinding away minuscule imperfections. Their outward appearances were also treated similarly. Each and every piece of merchandise was absent of even a single speck of dust, to the point that they sparkled. The high level of attention paid to their maintenance was another point that elevated their value.

I didn't sense any cut-corners in their production either. A novice might not notice all these details, but even a novice should still be able to recognize how amazing these goods are.

「Is there anything that you would like Melissa? If you're fine with a weapon

then it's alright to choose one」(Hitto)

After I told her, she replied "Eh!?" while looking really surprised.
But something like before might happen again. It should be alright if Melissa had something to bring along for self-defense.
(TL: He's talking about the incident with the 3-idiots last chapter)

We shouldn't have to worry about getting any armor though. The [Mirage Dress] that she is borrowing is a rather excellent piece of armor.

On top of having defensive power, when it sensed hostility, the dress had the special ability of shrouding and mist-ifying your entire body to the point where it would be difficult for attacks to hit you.

However, if it had that effect then it would've have been fine or it to activate against that bunch earlier…… Is what I thought but, it must have been because that bunch didn't hold any hostility towards her.

They may not have meant any physical harm. But their intentions were still distorted the wrong way.

「If there's a weapon that looks useful then go ahead and have a look at it」(Hitto)

「No, but as expected I cannot help but feel apologetic this. As it is, Master is already graciously collecting funds for my sake——」(Melissa)

Even though I told Melissa to go ahead and pick out something appropriate for her, she was once again wearing a sorry-looking expression.

「After all, it's not like we're that desperate for money right now. If it's something at this level, then I'll show you that I can earn back the cost in no time at all」(Hitto)

"Don't let little things worry you so much," I tried to convey it to her with a kind smile but, her mentality is still a bit hesitant huh.
Maybe it's modesty or something like that——

「The assessment's done」

Hmm? It's already over huh, that was surprisingly quick.

I left the conversation with Melissa for another time, and made my way to the

counter.
And afterward the dwarf shopkeeper gave me his explanation.

「Since these pieces of equipment over here have suffered quite a bit, the price won't be very high. Still, all together it's worth around 1,000 Gold. The ones over here have had very thorough maintenance done on them. Take a look at this paper for a complete breakdown. Anyway, the total value for these is 8,000 Gold」

Upon hearing their values I stared in completely amazement. No, not because of the prices, I was astonished by the accuracy of Melissa's estimations. Was she at this level because she was a slave of a merchant?
(TL: Melissa guessed the prices exactly right in chapter 4)

I guess you could say, if she was at this level then most likely she should have the qualifications to be a [Checker (Appraiser)].
[Checker] was an upper-class job that you could obtain in the game. Although, production-classes like [Drugger] and [Smith] needed to gain the necessary experience before getting it—— I should investigate this next opportunity I have.

「What's with the dumb face?」

「Ah, yea my bad. It's just. No nevermind, that amount of money is good enough, I'll leave it to you. By the way, Do you buy recall stones here?」(Hitto)

「Recall stones? That sort of thing isn't within my expertise ya know. There are stores that specialize in magic devices. It would be best to go and see them instead」

「I see. Do you know of any good stores?」(Hitto)

Melissa might be able to tell me about some if I asked her but, Well, might as well ask.

「If that's the case then ya should go to Eringi's Magic Shop. Or rather, in this town it's better if you avoided going anywhere else but there. The rest of 'em are all crooked on top of their high prices, after all」

「Is that so, thanks」(Hitto)

「Do you have a map? I can draw one for ya if ya need」

As opposed to his appearance, this dwarf was a nice person. Although, his words and expression made it seem like he was constantly irritated.
The “Gap” is pretty amazing.

「Ah, Master, if it is regarding the location of that store then I already know about it」(Melissa)

As expected, Melissa already knew about it huh. Regardless, she’s still amazing.

「Since it seems like she knows the way, we should be fine without it」(Hitto)

I informed him of this, and the only thing he retorted with was “Dat right”.
Well, if you got used to this bluntness then it could be considered cute.
(TL: Tsundere dwarfs)

「By the way…… Come to think of it, I’m called Hitto so is it alright if I ask for your name?」(Hitto)
「It’s Dowan」(Dowan)

「So it’s Dowan. I plan on coming here from now on so my best regards」(Hitto)

「Ah, customers are always welcome to come」(Dowan)

「Yea. So then Dowan, do you any good weapons for this girl? I wanted something for self-defense though」(Hitto)

After that Melissa let out an “Eh!?” in a surprised tone, but I decided that it would be best to ignore it.

「For her, huh? Let’s see. Jou-chan, have you used a weapon before?」(Dowan)

「Tha-That is, umm… I’ve only tried using a sword for training purposes before——」(Melissa)

A sword for training purposes? Do slaves often have to learn swordsmanship? Or maybe it’s because Tornelo was a merchant so he thought she could be useful as a bodyguard?

「That so. So you don’t got any real combat experience, right?」(Dowan)

「That is correct. I only learned some of the basic forms」(Melissa)

And then, without saying a single word, Dowan went over to one of the display

walls and brought back a single slender sword.

「This is a [Wind Estoc]. An estoc by itself isn't exactly a lightweight weapon, but this one's combined with a magic stone during it's production. One of it's features is being as light as a feather. In addition, if you are proficient in using magic and if you pour magic into it when you swing then the strength of the Wind will add to it's effective range」

Oh, I see. As expected, he chose a very appropriate weapon for her huh. Moreover, these type of slender swords could also be used as equipment for production-class jobs. This was something from back in the game but, there was no harm in bringing it along.

「How about it? Why don't you try swinging it a little, Melissa?」(Hitto)

"Is that alright?" She looked for confirmation from me and I gave her my consent.

「Ah, it really is very lightweight. If it's like this then even I would be able to use it, however――」(Melissa)

That last part was a bit unenthusiastic huh. Judging by her looks, well, she's probably concerned about the price.

「If I were to consider buying this then how much would it cost?」(Hitto)

「Ahh, well in that case 15,000 Gold would be fine」(Dowan)

15,000 huh. Should I buy it for that price? Truthfully I never used this type of weapon in the game so I don't know the market price but, while I was pondering it Melissa raised her voice and let out an "Eh!?" in surprise.

「What's wrong, is it really expensive?」(Hitto)

I whispered in Melissa's ear to make sure that Dowan wouldn't hear us.

「Quite the opposite! It is completely dirt cheap! Based off my own judgement, at the very least the raw materials needed to produce this would cost a minimum of 60,000 Gold!」(Melissa)

Oh, so your saying it's cheap. If that was there case then there should be no problems, but to think that the price was less then half huh.

「I get it, I'll be purchasing this. Here's the payment」(Hitto)
「Ahh, then I'll say my thanks to ya」(Dowan)

「Nah, I believe we were able to buy some really nice goods. It's just, are you able to make a living off this?」(Hitto)

The amounts of money that Melissa mentioned somewhat bothered me so I decided to ask about it.

「Well, just barely I guess. But for me, this is much better than having the equipment that I painstakingly made just sit here gathering dust, after all」(Dowan)

Oh I get it. So that's why he doesn't really care about the money huh. The taxes were raised, and I heard that everywhere you look they try to squeeze every last penny out of you. Taking that into considering, I agree with Melissa when she says that this was a really fine store. It still looked beat-up though.

「Here, Melissa. Go ahead and use this」(Hitto)
「Is, is this really alright?」(Melissa)
「I'm the one requesting it. In times like this you should accept it without being reserved」(Hitto)

Since I insisted on it, Melissa deeply bowed her head.

「I understand. This weapon that Master has so graciously given me, I will cherish it as a treasure for the rest of my life」

No—— Like I said, you're exaggerating it too much. Also, I would be troubled if you treated it like a treasure. It's for self-defense after all.

「By the way, judging by your outfit you're an adventurer, right?」(Dowan)

Just as I thought it would be a good time to leave, Dowan called out to me so I might as well hear him out.

「Yea that's right, you could tell?」(Hitto)

「Pretty much. Well, the only people who go this far out of their way to come here are adventurers after all. Anyways, you're called Hitto huh. You're a pretty high ranked adventurer, right? After all, you're carrying around some real nice equipment」(Dowan)

What should I do. I think that telling him that I just registered as a [Beginner] would be a bad idea.
Nevertheless, as expected of the person who manages a shop like this one. Just by looking at my equipment, he could discern these type of things.

「Well, I'll leave that up to your imagination. So, is there something you need from me?」

Based on his way of talking, it looks like he only wanted to confirm if I was an adventurer or not.

「Yea that's right. Five days ago I asked the Guild if they could bring me some iron ore and some magical fire stones and earth stones, but since then I haven't gotten a reply. My stock is about to run out so I'm in a pinch. It's fine if you go in your free time, but can you check and see if they got the request for me?」(Dowan)

I see. It was a request but it seemed pretty easy to accomplish huh.
Even so, I guess since everyone needed money the organization was kind of a mess.

「Understood, I'll go ask. But to think that you request those things from adventurers huh. I thought that sort of thing would be under the Merchant Guild's expertise」(Hitto)

「Normally. Before I would go through the Merchant Guild to get someone to gather those things. But lately all of the merchants have only been prioritizing Bungle's stores so they won't even come around here. That's why I'm relying on the Adventurer Guild though」(Dowan)

That Bungle huh…… He's really a troublesome guy.

「Sure seems difficult. I understand now. But, is it really alright if I only go in my free time?」(Hitto)

「Well, if it's before the 7th then it should be fine. But if you can get to it earlier then that would be better」(Dowan)
(TL: The current date is "The 4th of April" so he would like it done in 3-ish days)

「Understood. I plan on leaving early tomorrow morning for a request, but when I return in the evening I'll be sure to ask」(Hitto)

「Thanks. In return, next time I'll give ya a special service」(Dowan)

Just be listening him talk for a bit, I could tell that he was a fairly excellent shopkeeper.
Although, his never-changing expression made him look irritated the entire time.

Well whatever. Melissa and I parted ways with Dowan and left the store behind——

Chapter 12 “Staying at the Inn”

「Goshujin-sama. What should we do about vising Eringi? Today, the sun had already begun to set, and I believe that the store should be closing soon——」(Melissa)

Melissa asked me while sitting on the coachman’s seat.
We certainly spent a lot of time in Dowan’s store after all.

Well, I’m fine with that either way.

「Let’s leave going to the magic device shop for later. We might find some other uses for the recall stones after all. There’s no real need to sell them right now. It would be a bit different if we really needed the money, but for now we’re finished selling things」(Hitto)

「Yes. You are certainly correct. Since purchasing recall stones would cost us 60,000 Gold, I also believe that it would be a good idea to hold onto them for now.」(Melissa)

…… Do they really go for that much? No, they sell for 20,000 so double that price would be within reason, but to think it would be three times that…

「Well whatever. So then, next is an inn. We’ve got to find a place to stay for the night」(Hitto)

「Eh!? Ah… Yes, that is true. An inn is it」(Melissa)

Hmm? for some reason her eyes are darting back and forth. Why is her face turning so bright red?

「Melissa, your face is red you know」(Hitto)

「Hya! I-ish dat sho?」(Melissa)

Yea. Not just her face, but her pronunciation is also a bit off.

「Do you have a cold? In that case, it would be better if we found an inn quickly huh. Do you have any recommendations?」(Hitto)

「Ye-Yes. Then, I know of an inn just ahead that will also be able to accommodate the wagon」(Melissa)

Fumu. I would be grateful if they looked after the wagon as well.

「Well then, I guess we should go there. I'll leave the navigation to you, Melissa」(Hitto)

「Of course! I have received your command!」(Melissa)

Hmm? Somehow, she's become strangely energetic huh? Was it not a cold?

◇◆◇

Melissa guided us towards the inn and we arrived shortly after.
It was a building made of bricks, and it stood three stories high. It's appearance closely resemble a Business Hotel.
According to Melissa, there also appears to be something that looks like a large public bath.
There was also a Toilet installed in each room. Since it had a magic device used for flushing it with water, it felt pretty much the same as back on Earth.

In front of the entrance stood a man that looked exactly like a bellboy and, upon noticing the wagon approach, he led us to a private stall exclusively used for wagons.
We left the wagon there, and together we headed to the inn.

Incidentally, it appears that they will also properly feed the horses fodder. These accommodations are certainly convenient.

And then, in order to complete our check-in, we were escorted to the front-counter which pretty much resembled one from my world.

The stone floor made a nice *Click-Clack* sound as you walked across it. It wasn't as good as marble, but it was still a good floor nonetheless.

Behind the counter stood a plump woman around the age of 40.

「I would like to check-out a room for today」(Hitto)

「Yes, lodging is it. Is it your first time here, Okyakusan?」(40-something)

「Yea, that's right. Are there any empty rooms?」(Hitto)

「There's no problem with that. It's just, since everywhere is swamped I think you'll have to room together though. If you're rooming together with a slave then in that case I'll be taking the fee for only one person」(40-something)

I unintentionally knitted my eyebrows in suspicion. What is this woman even saying?

「Hmm? Are you unsatisfied wit that? In that case I think it would be best if you searched for a different inn, Although it will be the same everywhere else——」(40-something)
「I'm not upset because of that sort of thing. I don't know if being a slave makes a difference or not, but since another person is staying too, naturally you should charge for two people right?」(Hitto)

I asked this with a "What the hell are you playing at?" attitude about me. But instead the woman responded with a confused look.

「Well, if you consent to that then I'm fine with that too. So, about the room, if you're together with a slave then in that case I guess it'll be a Single-sized bed」(40-something)
「Hey wait a minute. Why did you assume it would be a Single?」(Hitto)

「Eh? Ahh, I see, so is a Double more to your preference? You'll have plenty of extra room with that. In that case」(40-something)
「Wait, wait, hold up. That is, no, I don't think it would be too strange, but do you have any Twin beds?」(Hitto)

Geez, going straight to a Double-bed is being way too hasty.

「Haa? Twin? Hey you. That kind of room has two separate beds, you know?」(40-something)

Of course it does. Why are you saying something so obvious. Do you think that I don't already know that?

「I know that. So, do you have any empty Twin rooms?」(Hitto)

「We have some but, is that really alright with you?」(40-something)

「Of course it's alright with me. That's what I've been telling you」(Hitto)

「Ano, Goshujin-sama. Will that really be alright?」(Melissa)

Eh, You too, Melissa!? Why are you guys asking me this with such confused looks.

「Anyways, a Twin is fine. How much is the fee?」(Hitto)

「Ah, yea… well then, the fee for a one night stay for two people is 8,000 Gold」(40-something)

…… That's pretty expensive. I remember that, back in the game, the more expensive ones costed 2,000 Gold for one person.
Well, but it can't be helped. I paid the woman the fee, received the key, and headed to the room with Melissa.

By the way, we started off with a Single but I think that having separate rooms would be best. But since I was worried about having to look after the wagon, I decided to settle with being in a room together.
If I voiced a complaint then I think they would change it but, judging by her attitude, I don't think Melissa would be alright with that.

The room was, well, it felt pretty ordinary. Conversely, the fact that I don't feel any discomfort might be considered amazing.
Although the ground was made of floorboards, a personal toilet was prepared, and inside near the wall were two beds lined up side-by-side

There was even a closet for you to put your clothes. Across from the bed was a night stand with a magic device on it that made sure you had enough light.
A desk with drawers was also installed, and a single notepad was left on top of it.

Right now the curtains were closed, but if you opened them then you could see through a glass window.

Honestly, if you ignored the fact that there was no TV, then this would be exactly like a Hotel from my world.
All that's left is if there was a bath or not, huh.

And, just when I was thinking that I should take off my armor and combat equipment, Melissa came and gave me a hand with it.

This somehow makes us look like an intimate married couple—— Wait, what am I even saying.

Well, for now I stuffed my armor into the Magic Bag, but I kept out my weapons as usual.
You never know what might happen after all.

And, I sat down on the bed but…… I wonder why Melissa kept standing in front of me with her hands held together.

「No, Melissa. How about sitting down and relaxing a bit?」(Hitto)

When I called out to her, she responded with a “Yes, Thank you very much”—— and She sat on the floor in a Seiza position.

Yup, looks like this world has Seiza too huh…… No, that’s not right.

「What are you doing?」(Hitto)

「Yes, you told me to sit down so, Ah! Perhaps I have done something to offend you! Is there something wrong with the way I am sitting?」(Melissa)

「No, instead of that, sitting on the bed should be fine. There’s an extra one after all」(Hitto)

「Tha! That sort of thing! The likes of me who is but a lowly slave, other than as a nighttime companion, for me to do something like sit on the bed is just simply, just simply!」(Melissa)

Yea, just now a certain “keyword” came out but, well let’s leave that aside.

「A lowly slave…… Melissa, you should stop undervaluing yourself already. I’m pretty sure I told you this already but you have been plenty helpful and have saved me plenty of trouble so far. That’s why you should go ahead and use the bed without worrying about it」(Hitto)

「But that is…… Even so, I am still a slave—— For me who is nothing other than Master’s possession, to be treated like a human being is……」(Melissa)

Why is that so? Exactly what kind of treatment has Melissa been given before that made her like this? Seriously, I have a hard time understanding it.

「Melissa, it seems you’ve misunderstood something but, certainly I just went with the flow and decided to buy you as a slave however, I didn’t originally intend to do ‘that’」(Hitto)

「Eh……? Ah, i-is that so—— I guess that's how it is……」(Melissa)

Huh? What? For some reason she became strangely depressed.

「Anyways. Even if you still embrace your status of a slave for now, I think it would be best if you did something about that way of thinking from now on. But nonetheless, I still can't see you as a slave. So please, go ahead and use the bed」(Hitto)

「But that's……」(Melissa)

A very weak voice escaped her lips. But, she really did lose all her enthusiasm huh? What's up with that.

「Fine, in that case, please listen to this command. Use the bed」(Hitto)

「…… I understand」(Melissa)

After that she finally moved over to the bed.
But, is it really alright if slaves are treated like that? Certainly I once thought about things like buying a slave but, When I look at Her now, instead of thinking of Her as a slave, I wish to accept Her more as an ordinary comrade.

But as expected the funds needed to set her free are quite high. In our present state we are hopelessly limited.
Seriously, it really feels hopeless.

Hmm? Did the negativity somehow spread to me too?
Muu, in that case I better do something about it——

Chapter 13 “The Position of a Slave”

Melissa was upset.
No, it might just be my imagination but, even though she’s been going “Goshujin-sama, Goshujin-sama” the entire time, right now she is being completely silent.

Although, if I called out to her then she would still answer with something like “what is it”.
I’m not sure what the problem was but the mood was too heavy.

That’s why, in order to somehow recover her mood, I decided that we should go to the baths together.
I say “together” but from what I hear the males and females are separated so obviously we would go to different baths but, will her mood improve a bit after relaxing in the hot springs? At least that’s what I’m hoping for.

Although it might be a bit abrupt and she might not want to go, I was pretty much fixated on the idea.

Well, with that I invited her to take a bath and she responded with “Yes, I understand” but, she didn’t seem that happy about it.

But to think that there were towels prepared for us in the closet huh.
However, now that I think about it, I don’t have any underwear to change into.
Whoops, I should’ve bought some of those too huh.

But, it’s too late now to be regretting that.

「Sorry about that. Looks like I forgot to buy underwear. At least for today, is it alright if we bare with it?」(Hitto)

I tried to inform Melissa while mixing in an apology.
For some reason she tilted her head while looking puzzled and replied “Haa ……” while seeming indifferent about it.

Hmm? Maybe I said something strange.

Well nevermind, For now it's to the bath.

We heard about the baths beforehand so we knew that it was on the first floor.
Located on the opposite side across from the baths was something like a dining hall.

I brought Melissa along to the place where the bathhouse was.
There were two entrances, instead of a sign there were curtains that sectioned off the entry points.
You were able to tell which one was for males and which one was for females by a plate hung above each of them.

「Now then, Let's head into the baths and freshen ourselves up」(Hitto)
「Yes, Goshujin-sama……」(Melissa)

Yup~ Melissa still seemed a somewhat gloomy huh.
Well, I would be grateful if her energetic spirit returned from taking a bath though.

While thinking that Melissa and I headed towards the same entrance together—— Eh! Oi !

「Wait a second! Why are you following me!?」(Hitto)

I reflexively grabbed Melissa's hand and led her to a place away from the entrance, and asked her while emphasizing my tone.

I mean, Isn't that odd? Why did Melissa follow me into the men's bath.
Eh? Was she a shameful woman ?

「……? Ano, is there some sort of problem?」(Melissa)

Melissa was…… She answered me why tilting her head but—— Eh? Are you seriously saying that? No, her expression is a bit different, it looks like she really doesn't understand.

「No, You understand that this is the men's bath right?」(Hitto)
「Yes」(Melissa)
「And, The women's bath that one」(Hitto)

I pointed towards the entrance on the other side.

And then she nodded her head to confirm that she already understood that.

「In that case, do you understand which one you should use, Melissa?」(Hitto)

「Well yea. It is a slaves job to accompany her Master after all」(Melissa)

「No, That's not right-! It would be weird if you brought a woman into the men's bath right?」(Hitto)

But Melissa responded with an expression that looked as if, from the bottom of her heart, she completely did not understand.

「Ano, Goshujin-sama. Fundamentally, it would be normal for a slave to accompany her Master into into a bath regardless of their sex in order to attend to them. Rather, it would be unbelievable for a slave to do something such as entering a bath by themselves but……」(Melissa)

…… Seriously? Haa?

「Eh, so then Melissa will accompany me and, how should I say, with a bunch of other men inside there, uhh, that is, Wil-will you get naked?」(Hitto)

「If Master so wishes it then that will be possible, but normally it will be with only underwear on. It is also possible to change into clothes specifically for use in the bath」(Melissa)

So that's how it is…… No, well, that should be obvious. Who would want to willingly show off their naked body for other people to see.

But, to strip if I wanted her to… I don't really understand that part.

「In any case, when you are with me that is definitely out of the question. It would be best if Melissa used the women's bath to freshen up instead」(Hitto)
「Eh? However, that is——」(Melissa)

「Okyaku-sama」

Hmm? Just when Melissa was about to say something, a voice called out to us from behind.

And, when I turned my head I found a middle-aged man with a forced smile on his face standing there.
Judging by his appearance, he seems to be one of the staff members at this inn

huh.

「You need something?」(Hitto)

「Ahh, that's not it. By chance I heard a bit of your conversation and was curious but, No I thought I might have misheard you before but, You could not possibly be thinking of sending that slave to the bathhouse by herself right?」(Staff)

What's up with him? This guy just asked me a very odd question.

「That's what I was planning but is there some kind of problem with that? Melissa is a woman. Obviously she should use the women's bath」(Hitto)

「To do such a thing! No, I thought I was mistaken but please do spare us that! That kind of behavior will be troublesome!」(Staff)

Haa? Troublesome? I have no idea what you're saying.

「Why would you be troubled? It should be fine to use whichever bath right?」(Hitto)

「Certainly if it was together with Okyaku-sama then that would be completely fine but, when entering the bathhouse, if a slave were to enter the bath independently then that would be an annoyance to the other guests——」(Staff)

Haa? You accidentally let your tone show how completely peeved you are, you know.

「What are you saying? Why would Melissa be bothering other guests just by entering the bath?」(Hitto)

「That is, perhaps Okyaku-sama really does not understand it? If such a filthy thing went in then the bath would become dirt-Gue! Gu-guruji……」(Staff)

I reflexively grabbed the guy's collar and held him up in the air.
Even if it was me, I had enough strength to do that.

「Gou, Goshujin-sama please stop it! If you do that sort of thing!」(Melissa)

Melissa begged me while latching onto my arm.
The staff member's feet were also flailing about but…… Any more than this would be really bad huh——

I released the man and let him fall to the ground.
Geho, geho after having a coughing fit, he raised his eyes up to me, and ran away while letting out a little scream.

「Dammit! What the hell was that!」(Hitto)

「…… For me, I do not understand why Master became so upset about that. Slave are different from human beings. That is why it is forbidden for us to use the bath like a normal person does. That is common sense in this world——」(Melissa)

「Like I care about that common sense, it's complete bullshit. I will do things based on my own beliefs. That's enough, anyways let's not go to the baths. We're heading back」(Hitto)

Geez, I'm really pissed off.
Even if you tell me that's how slavery works, I really can't accept it after all.

In the first place, anyone would get pissed off if they were treated like accompanying pieces of trash.

「…… I really cannot understand Master's way of thinking」(Melissa)

While we were heading away from the bathhouse Melissa murmured that sort of thing.
The treatment of slaves has been completely ingrained in her huh—— No, that should be obvious.
The more I think about it, Melissa might have been a slave in this world for a very long time.

If that was the case then if I told her to change her way of thinking right away then you would expect her to be troubled and confused by that. But, even so, I can't help but think that it is still somewhat messed up——

◇◆◇

We gave up on going to the baths but now that I think about it my stomach is a bit empty. After heading back to the room and grabbing the Magic Bag we had left there, I went with Melissa to the dinning hall to get some dinner.

But, even though I wanted to head to the baths to have Melissa regain her

energy, that only ended up with me feeling disgusted instead huh.

Tomorrow, Let's search for an inn with a private bath instead.
It's already too late to do something about today though.

The dinning hall had about 10 wooden tables set up.
All of them were round tables huh.
Right now only about half of the tables were taken up.

And…… There was a pair with a man and his accompanying slave.
Since he looked like a soldier they strangely stood out. Was that his profession?

Other than that, everyone else looked like merchants or couples.
Well whatever. For now let's find an appropriate place and have a seat with Melissa, or so I thought.

「Melissa. Like I've been saying, instead of sitting on the floor please use the chair over there」(Hitto)

「Eh? But that is——」(Melissa)
「It's fine, so please. I won't be able to settle down」(Hitto)

Since I insisted, Melissa sat down on the chair with her usual nervous expression.
It was something that I told her to do, but it somehow resembled telling someone to take a seat for an interview huh.

「Ano, Please have some water……」

The person who brought the water was, it was a girl with an apron wrapped around her but, she's looking at me with an odd look. Geez.

「This is the way I do things」(Hitto)
「Haa……」(Apron)

With a really indifferent response, her odd look didn't change
Haa… whatever.
(TL: This "Haa" is a *Sigh*)

「Do we choose our dinner?」(Hitto)
「No, the menu has already been decided」(Apron)
「That so, then I'll leave it to you」(Hitto)

She bowed her head while saying “Understood” and left.
I can see into the kitchen from here huh.
And, they were quietly whispering something to each other. Gives me a bad feeling, Seriously.

So Melissa and I were…… Without knowing what to talk about, we both sat there completely silent.
This sucks, it really does.

In addition—— For a while now, it feels like were were being bathed in an intense stare.
The one responsible was, it was that man who looked like a soldier. It might be my imagination but I think his glare is fixed on me.

What’s up with him? I don’t remember anything that would make him hate me though.
Actually, the slave over there is sitting on the floor in a Seiza huh.
The slave was female and she was wearing a maid outfit. Her posture was nice huh. With a somewhat chilling atmosphere around her, she was sitting with her eyes closed while not fidgeting in the slightest.

Yea but still, Even if you told me that was the proper way for a slave to act, I still can’t help but feel uncomfortable with that.

「Pardon me for the wait」(Apron)

While I was lost in thought the food came huh. Well, whatever the case maybe, let’s dig in… oi——

「Hey! Why is there only enough food for one person? Will another portion of food come out later?」

「Eh? No, we only prepared Okyaku-sama’s portion though……」(Apron)

「That’s not it, there’s another companion right in front of me, right. What happened to her portion?」(Hitto)

Upon hearing that, “Eh?” is plastered all over your face you know.
Oh please, not this again……

「Perhaps you are telling that you didn’t prepare anything because she’s a

slave?」(Hitto)

「Yes, that is why」(Apron)

She quickly responded huh. Seems like she doesn't have any ill intent.

「Oi oi, if that's how it is then I can't consent to that. When we checked in we paid for two people. If that's the case then you should properly arrange for two people's portions right? Am I wrong?」(Hitto)

I tried asking it as gently as I could, but the girl ended up going "EHhh~" with a frown on her face. She made it seem as if some bothersome "Claimer " suddenly showed up.

You're joking right? Did I say something strange?

「Goshujin-sama, Please stop it already. I am fine with just the leftovers from your meal」(Melissa)

「Don't say something so stupid. If that happened then I would be troubled if you collapsed from malnutrition」(Hitto)

Well, as I said that, the surrounding looks became a bit painful.
I was being treated like a complete weirdo. Damn it, but I honestly can't accept it.

「I get it. Whatever. In that case, I'll pay an extra fee so please bring her a portion as well. There isn't any problem with that right?」(Hitto)

「No way! To do so much for me!」(Melissa)
「It's fine. Besides, I eat quite a lot so there won't be any leftovers for you」(Hitto)

So then I once again asked the waitress "Can you do that?"

「Ehhh, in that case there would be no problem with——」(Apron)
「DON'T F**K WITH MEEEeee」

Then, just when it seemed like she was about to agree with it, suddenly an angry roar came flying towards us.

I thought to myself "What was that?" and as I looked towards the source of the voice, that soldier that brought along a slave stood up with a devilishly furious expression on his face, and he started walking this way——

Chapter 14 “Slave and Adventurer”

Suddenly shouting, the man came closer to me.
Looking at him again, he had a really nasty and coarse physique.
Anyways, his muscles were certainly no joke, and his height was enormous. It wouldn’t be hard to believe that he was about 2 meters tall.
(TL note: 6 ft. 5.5”)

I’m not a very short person but, even still I normally would have to tilt my head back to look at him. Since I was sitting down, if I fixed my eyes on him for too long then I think my neck would start to hurt pretty bad.

And I think his equipment were pretty good items as well.
Resting on his shoulders was black scale armor that looked like it used the Demon Beast “Black Turtle” as raw materials.
I think that his gauntlet and greaves were made similarly.

At a glace I could not tell if it had some Magic Effect attached to it, but I do know that the Black Turtle itself is extremely hard.
If you attacked it with an average weapon then I doubt it would even leave a scratch.

In addition, gathering these raw materials must have been extremely difficult. Just from that I could tell that he was a pretty skilled adventurer.

Well, all that’s left is his face huh. Yea, his angular face was also quite large. And his hair was a crimson color.
With a face like that, if he covered it in scars then it would be plenty intimidating.

Well, even if he didn’t have any scars it was still a very rugged and gruff face. If you showed it to a child they would without a doubt start crying. It was that kind of face.

And, that guy was glaring at me as if he despised me.
What should I do, I’m shaking in my boots. Just kidding.
Actually, because of this guy that girl who brought us our food hastily retreated

to the back huh.

「I've been listening for a while now——」

Whoa, he opened up his big mouth just like a turtle does when it swallows something huh.

「And you've only been spouting random bullshit!」

Looks like he snapped once again huh. I can hear you even if you don't shout in a loud voice though——

「Frankly speaking, I have absolutely no idea why you feel so offended」(Hitto)

「Ahhn? Ya don't get it? Are you making fun of me, –kora!」

I'm not really making fun of you. Or rather, I don't understand a single thing this guy is saying.

「What I'm fking pissed off at! Is the way you treat that slave! You bastard—— What's with the way you treat your fking slave, –Gora!」

It sort of fits his appearance, but his way of talking oozed of idiocy.
Just how much of a "Yankee" is this guy?

「I'm was just thinking about feeding her dinner like normal though」(Hitto)

「Ahhn? Normal you say?」

「That's right. Is something strange about that?」(Hitto)

「Of fking course there is, –kora! In the first place, that bitch, she isn't sitting on the floor! Why is she fking sitting in a chair like a human being, –kora!

Ahh, I see. Basically, this guy is like "that". He is a believer in the segregation of slaves huh, I see no wonder why.

「Goshujin-sama. I will move to the floor so here we should——」(Melissa)
「No, it's fine. Just stay there」(Hitto)
「But that is……」(Melissa)
「It's fine so just stay where you are. Also, if you did something like that then I would feel bad because it would look like I somehow lost」(Hitto)

After I said that much, while showing a concerned expression, Melissa remained sitting in the chair.

However, as expected, this guy doesn't seem like he would accept that.

「Bastard, you've got some nerve. To think that you wouldn't fix things even after I said so much huh」

「I don't need to fix anything. I don't know how you do things, and I don't plan on nitpicking at your methods but, when it comes to Melissa I will do things as I want. In addition, you don't have any right to complain about it」(Hitto)

「Do as you want, you say? You mean the way you treat her like a human being? Earlier you also wanted food to be prepared for that bitch, you've only been fking around so far」

「I'm not really "messing around". Also, I would appreciate it if you stopped saying "bitch, bitch". Melissa is a person, a human being. She's not some animal」(Hitto)

After I answered back at him again and again, the man snorted while making a sort of stupid looking expression.

「A human you say? Are you really saying that, you bastard! That thing's a slave you know!」

「What of it? Being a slave doesn't change the fact that she's still a person」(Hitto)

「That's where yur wrong! Listen up! Slaves are possessions! They're livestock! They're not fking humans! They are an existence that is forever inferior to humans! Slaves don't got to eat food that ain't leftovers, and they don't got to sit in fking chairs! It's good enough as long as they service the Masters that buy them! Do you really not understand that, you fking idiot!」

Geez, just be listening to him I think my ears would rot. In the past I also thought that I wanted a slave but, just listening to this conversation only left me feeling disgusted.

「Enough already, I get it. Like I said before, I don't plan on voicing any complaints about how you treat your slaves. However, I don't plan on changing the way I do things. Against someone like me, just talking would be completely pointless right? So hurry up and return to your seat——」(Hitto)

In that instant, along with an outrageously loud sound, the round table that I was sitting at suddenly disappeared from in front of me. And from inside the kitchen you can hear the echo of something shattering to pieces.

Most likely that was the table that was just here.
“Kyaa~” a scream resounded out immediately afterwards, and the other guests ran away from the dining hall in a panic.
Wait…… My food——

「What I’m saying is, that I don’t fking like it you piece of shit」

Melissa was completely tensed up. For now, it’s good that she wasn’t hurt, but her shoulders were already shaking.
Well that’s to be expected. After all, she had to listen to this guy rant and then he went and destroyed the table.

「I don’t really care but hey you, is it really alright if you make a scene here? Even as a joke, you’re an adventurer right?」(Hitto)

Causing trouble is forbidden right, for adventurers.

「Ahhn? Are you just a poser with that outfit of yours? There isn’t anybody in this town who hasn’t heard of me, the [Expert] rank Zak. There’s no one with a death wish that would go complaining about me doing something like this」(Zak)

I see. No wonder why the kitchen staff retreated inside and are doing nothing but cower in fear.
Doesn’t look like the guards are coming anytime soon either

「So, what exactly do you want from me? No matter how you look at it, starting a fight would be bad right?」(Hitto)

Well, going by the reasoning of that trio I met earlier today, they claimed that it would be OK as long as long as we used only our bare-hands.

「Yea, I won’t be doing something stupid like that. A duel. If we do that then there will be no complaints!」

…… A duel huh. Now that you mention it, I completely forgot about that.
Certainly that sort of System existed back in the game as well. Basically, except for in certain specified areas, it was forbidden for players to commit acts like

killing or to PK other players. But the act of dueling was acceptable.

However, even with that it was supposed to be impossible to have a duel while you were in a city. Something like a Colosseum or some other special facility, if you weren't within one of these Fields then it should be impossible. Obviously, you also needed the consent of both parties to have a duel.

「Having a duel while in the city should be forbidden right?」(Hitto)

Just in case I talked about the parts I knew about. Although there was no evidence yet, but there is a high probability that the game's system was reflected onto this world.

「Ahhn? What are you talking about, bastard. This ain't inside the city, it's inside an inn right?」(Zak)

This guy just replied with his own nonsensical rule huh…… But based on this, as expected, you basically can't start a duel while in the city.

Well then, if even you tell me this I still don't have a reason for doing something so troublesome as a duel.
In the first place, this was something that guy decided on his own without the inn's okay. If this guy killed me then he might be able to weasel his way out of it, but if I ended up killing him instead then there's a pretty high chance that it would turn into a big deal.

With all to lose and nothing to gain, it was a completely ridiculous situation.

「Sorry but I refuse. I won't do something so pointless」(Hitto)
「So your basically saying, even though you said some arrogant things, you're gonna abandon your very own slave huh?」(Zak)

'What?' I turned my head towards Melissa but—— Before I even noticed, that Maid had circled around Melissa and was holding a knife to her neck

「If you happen to decline the duel then I'll order her to slice and kill your fking slave without hesitation. My "training" is flawless. She absolutely won't defy me」(Zak)

Kuu…… I let down my guard, this is the worst. In this situation my [Cancel] is completely useless.

The people who got involved with Melissa, it was possible for me to [Cancel] their actions since it was right before they happened. If I used [Cancel] on that Maid then her raised knife might temporarily be put away.

However, right after she hears the order from this man called Zak, she will definitely go for the kill again.
If the target of my [Cancel] happens to be the same opponent, then there will be a short time-delay before I can reuse it on them.

On the other hand, using [Cancel] on Zak would also be pointless. This guy must have been angry at me from the moment we entered the dinning hall.
[Cancel] won't be able to erase those feelings he had.

If I used [Cancel] on the duel itself then he would immediately challenge me to another duel.
In this situation I only have one option left to choose.

Che, this really is troublesome.

「Alright, I'll accept the duel」(Hitto)

「Master don't! You shouldn't do it! It's impossible to go against an [Expert] opponent! Please don't concern yourself with someone like me and」(Melissa)
「DON'T SAY SOMETHING SO STUPID!」(Hitto)

I unintentionally shouted. Melissa gives up too easily. But, your own life is on the line here. Don't just give up on your own life like that.

「Melissa. For just a little bit, Believe in your Master」(Hitto)

I could hear her whisper 'Master' in a quite voice.
Seriously, I'm pissed. To make Melissa suffer because of this——

「So? How are we doing this?」(Hitto)

「Huh, that's obvious」(Zak)

The man picked up the Bag at his feet, and retrieved his personal weapon from it.
I was always curious about it, but looks like this guy has a Magic Bag as well.

「You bastard, are those twin swords on your waist your weapons?」(Zak)

I only answered ‘Yea, that’s right’. However, the fact that I took off my armor really sucks huh.
Although my Bag was pretty much sitting near Melissa’s feet, I doubt he would give me the time to go get it.

Thanks to that, right now I’m only dressed in a shirt and trousers.

Conversely, my opponent was wearing armor, and was stylishly brandishing a giant sword on his shoulder.
Well, even so, I don’t plan on killing this guy. Of course this was actually an official duel. In the appropriate situation I won’t hesitate to use legitimate self defense, but the situation right now has way too many undefined elements too it.

「So, let’s do this. Oi Seira, you better not fking let your eyes off that woman until the duel is over」(Zak)
「——Yes, Master」(Seira)

A monotone voice…… it sounded just like a machine huh. Now that I look at it her face is pretty though.

「This ain’t the time to be distracted by another person’s slave!」(Zak)

While saying that, Zak suddenly started to swing his giant sword.
At once I started to move in order to avoid the trajectory of his sword.
But as expected, I could easily tell that my movements were hindered without the benefits of my equipment

That being said, this guy really isn’t holding back huh. Screams continued to come from the kitchen.
Of course they would. After all, everything in the way of this guy’s swing was completely demolished by the giant sword.

There was even a hole in the wall. What will you do about the repair costs? I won’t be held responsible you know?

「Hmph, endlessly running around like that, seems like you’re at least quick on your feet」(Zak)

「Thanks for the compliment」(Hitto)

I casually returned his banter. But the truth is that I can’t be too careless.
What I have been dodging was this guy’s enormously large swings.
I was predicting the trajectory.

Well, thanks to that I pretty much know what Job this guy has though——

Chapter 15 “Breaker”

The Job of this man named Zak is [Breaker], no mistaking it.
[Breaker] was a High-class warrior type Job in the game.

Breakers were preset to be proficient in two handed weapons. In particular, people in the game really liked greatswords.
The reason being that, aside from them being easy for Breakers to use, by choosing to use greatswords a [Breaker] can learn many specialized greatsword skills.

And that skill was precisely the main reason why I guessed that this guy’s Job was [Breaker].
The skill this guy was using right now was, [Break Shot].

It was a skill which let you shoot out a shock-wave as you swung the greatsword.
For [Breakers] it was the most basic of all skills, and yet it was the skill that used the most often.

In any case, it was a skill that directly reflected the offensive power of the Player using it. In addition, it consumed very little stamina so you wouldn’t tire easily no matter how many times it was used.

Powerful attacks than can destroy your opponent from long distance, originally that was something that magic-type classes specialized in.
However, the framework of the game made it so that you had to type out every single incantation. So even though Magic had high firepower, it was slow and took a lot of time to cast.

On the other hand, Breakers had [Break Shot] which did not require an incantation. A skill that could mow down opponents one after another.

Breakers wielding greatswords were unmatched when going against a large number of low-level opponents. Soldiers who didn’t valiantly fight in close quarters combat, their existence overturned the traditional idea of a warrior

was.

The moment [Breakers] enter the battlefield, the people standing next to them would most certainly go “Huh? Was that just a shooting attack?” they would misinterpret the situation like that.

Well, because of that, the job known as [Breaker] was an existence that displayed a great impact on the battlefield.

「Hey, what’s the matter? If ya only run away then you won’t win ya know! Sooner or later I’ll corner you and finish you off!」(Zak)

Yup. You’re really energetic huh. And really strong huh. You really have a Job that was perfectly suited for annihilating a bunch of small-fry.

Although—— You’re opponent is a poor matched.
Now then, [Cancel]!

I activated [Cancel] on my Breaker opponent that was getting a bit too cocky.
As he was about to unleash his next skill, Zak’s stance returned to what it was a few seconds before.

And in that instance I drew closer to him with a step, and greeted him with the twin sword skill【X-Slicer】.
This was, well, just like the name implies it was a twin sword skill where you sliced your opponent with a intersecting slash that resembled an “X”.

And of course I Cancelled the lag time after using the skill, and put some distance between us by using a back-step.
Then, in the next instant a greatsword came swinging down before me.

His reaction was pretty impressive.

「You bastard…… What the hell did you do?」(Zak)

As expected his expression has changed huh. Earlier he was making a face that kinda made him look like an idiot, but now he was questioning me with a serious look.
Well, having your actions suddenly be Cancelled like that, it’s inevitable that you would become confused huh.

「Who knows? I wonder what it could be?」(Hitto)

But of course I feigned ignorance. After all, there's no need for me to go out of my way and explain my very own moves.

「Chii-, but if you keep using such a worthless attack like that, then ya won't be able to piece my armor」(Zak)

Yea, you're right. That armor is tough after all. If I attacked it normally then none of the damage will go through huh.
That's why, unlike what I did to the thieves before, I can't use [Cancel] to do a continuous combo.

After all, if I don't manage to deal some sort of damage then my opponent won't flinch.

And then—— Of course this would happen but, my opponent once again raise his sword over his head and continued to use [Break Shot].
Since it's so user-friendly, he can't help but using it huh.

But still, since his swing was so wide, I Cancelled it while lunging forward, And again landed an X-Slicer.
And again my opponent had a scowl on his face. It was an expression that made it seem like he was looking at an annoying insect. But still——

"Break Shot"【Use Cancel on Zak】Diving in and attacking with "X-Slicer"【Cancel】Back-Step followed by a "Break Shot" counterattack【Cancel on Zak】Diving in with "X-Slicer"【Cancel】Back-Step followed by a "Break Shot" counterattack【Cancel on Zak】Diving in with "X-Slicer"【Cancel】Back-Step——
And repeating onward.

「You, you bastard, stop fking around already!」(Zak)

Oops, looks like he finally got pissed off huh. He was made to repeat the same thing over 20 times now, after all.
This skill, if you used Cancel on an opponent in the in the middle of their attack then only the stamina consumption would remain. That's why, even though he was vigorously firing off skills before, if you look at him now then you could see that fatigue started to build up for some reason.

Even if you say that the stamina consumption for [Break Shot] is extremely low, that doesn't mean that it is non-existent.

After using it exclusively for a short time you'd obviously start taking deeper breaths.

Well, but still, I don't really think I can grasp victory by just leisurely letting him waste his energy.
It isn't like [Cancel] doesn't have its own risks to begin with.

Cancel was still a skill nonetheless, so some of my stamina is taken every time I use it.
Even so my stamina consumption was comparatively low, the reason being is because of the ability-up I have from raising my proficiency. It's also thanks to the stamina-recovery bracelet and the stamina-cost reduction ring I have.

By the way, those two only work on my endurance. Injuries were a completely different matter though.
If I get too careless then I might sustain damage that cannot be healed, that's why I can't overestimate my abilities too much.
Although I said things like 'This level of damage is completely fine,' all the time back in the game, now that the game world has become real life I have restrained myself from thinking that way as to not be too careless.

However, 'Then why are you constantly repeated the same actions over and over again?' you're probably thinking that but——

「Bastard, Is your goal to make me waste my stamina? But don't underestimate me! I haven't even got'n serious yeett!」(Zak)

You're not very convincing when you say that while short of breath though.
Well, still, that isn't my goal at all you know.

「I don't plan on doing that. This battle is about to reach its conclusion」(Hitto)

'Ahhn?' Zak made a scrutinizing face.
Well, I got the feeling that he wouldn't understand though.

「The only thing you can do is surrender right now, or to use your skill one more time just to have it broken again. But you can't use it anymore right? Even though you keep using it, it doesn't seem like a very impressive skill, Sure・isn't」(Hitto)

Even though you could say it was only a cheap provocation, Looks like it had an

instant effect on this muscle-brain.
‘Gu-nununuuuuu!’ his groaning voice was rising. He was so angry that his blood vessels started to bulge out from his forehead.

「Don’t fking underestimate Mee! It’s Full Power! Take thi——」(Zak)

No, either way, saying “full power” or shit like that doesn’t change anything. Hai, [Cancel].

「Naa!?」(Zak)

His mouth was hanging half open, but this guy actually never learns huh. Well, whatever, In order to settle this I once again charged towards him.

「Kuu! Again!? But my armor is」(Zak)
「Unfortunately for you——」(Hitto)

I readied both of the twin swords near my side and began focusing my concentration.
Looks like Zak was surprised by my form.
My stance was clearly different from the one I used before after all.

But I continued making my preparations. Truth be told, the firepower of X-Slicer itself is not much different from Double-Slicer.
‘But if so then why did you choose an X? Just for looks?’ Wrong. X-Slicer had the characteristic where it grinds away at endurance values of the portion where the blades intersect to an extreme degree.

And I have been using this X-Slicer to persistently and persistently grind away at the same spot repeated.
Naturally this placed a considerably large burden on the armor itself.

The spot where I have been crossing the twin swords should already be screaming. You could even see a faint fracture after all.
It seems like this guy hasn’t realized this small change yet, but I have been doing it for 10 minutes. This match has already been decided.

Now, let’s end this. Focusing my concentration on that fractured portion, and using the side of my waist to store power into the twin swords, I dashed forward while simultaneously using my arm to add rotations.

Gyurururuuuu! along with a rotational sound that resembled a drill, the twin sword weapon skill【Double-Screwdriver】magnificently pierced through the crack.

This skill was originally used as a short sword skill, and this was the twin sword version of that.
Well, in other words, with the short sword version you use a single hand to add rotation and increase the offensive power of a single blow, for this【Double-Screwdriver】you simultaneously use both hands to enhance the power even further and then you fire it off to pierce your target.

However, the force required was tremendous. In addition to the time needed to amass power, the massive amount of stamina consumption was another flaw. It's best used to finish off your opponent in one strike.

As I launched the twin swords forwards with a thrust, the paired blades gouged out the fracture, and together with the rotation the crack began to spread.

Since I don't plan on killing for now, I stopped the skill right before it reached his flesh. But after dodging the greatsword that came swinging down afterwards, I followed up by stepping forward and adding in a [Double-Slicer], Then the armor that my opponent was so proud of starting crumbling to pieces and fell to the ground.

Must've been some high-quality equipment. Serves you right.

「Nuguuuuoooooo! My…! My armor iiisssss~! The armor that I finally made after four years, myyyyyyyyy~…!」(Zak)

Seems like he's suffering more than expected. I see, four years huh. That sure paints a vivid picture of the time it took in real life huh.

「Sorry to ask while you're wallowing in sadness like this, but is it fine if we finish it with this? With your current appearance, this won't really be recognized as a duel right?」(Hitto)

In any case, the moment the armor fell off it revealed his naked body. This guy was wearing nothing underneath his armor huh.
Did you really want to boast about your muscles that badly?

「Finish? Finished you say? Kukuu! You underestimate me fking braaat! If it's come to this then I ain't holding back anymore! I'll blow you away with my strongest technique!」(Zak)

Haa? Strongest Technique? Hey, that stance where you lower the greatsword towards the ground—— [Break Cyclone]!? You've got to be kidding!

Isn't [Break Cyclone] an attack where you can display your might by putting all your strength into revolving, and sending the shock-wave from your blade out in all directions?

The stamina consumption was intense but the resulting force was terrifying. If you use something like that here then you'll blow away the entire dining hall you know!

「Hey you! If you use that here then your own slave will be involved and take a hit too you know!」(Hitto)

「Like I give a shit! If she's a slave that kicks the bucket because of that then who cares!」(Zak)

This guy's really messed up. Seriously, he's outrageous! But still!

「Oraaaa! Break Cycl——」(Zak)
「Cancel」(Hitto)
「Naa? Gubooooo!」

Yea. Well, it's sort of obvious but, I won't let you shoot off that sort of skill in the first place~.
For now I tactically use Cancel, and while he was showing an idiotic face I got close to him and attacked with [Shock-Slicer].

By the way, this doesn't inflict any damage, but it was a skill that temporarily knocks out the opponent you attacked it with.
If they are wearing armor then I can't use it on them, but since my opponent is naked this time there's no problem with using it.

And just like that, both of Zak's knees met the floor, and he fell forward like a waterfall and collapsed.
You could see his feet twitch a little bit but he definitely wasn't conscious. He completely fainted.

Haa- , at least for now looks like the match has ended——

Chapter 16 “Well For Now—— Run Away!”

The battle was over. No, I guess you could say it’s because my opponent had completely lost consciousness.
There probably isn’t anybody that would continue fighting in this situation.

Well, that’s all fine and dandy but—— the main problem has to do with Melissa. Now then, that maid should obediently…… Hey wait!

「You already let ‘er go!?」(Hitto)

I reflexively cried out a couple words of tsukkomi.
After all, that maid-clothes wearing slave… right now she had put away the knife, and was sitting in a seiza next to the head of the collapsed Zak.

……Well, nonetheless it’s great that she let Melissa go.

「Melissa, are you injured anywhere?」(Hitto)
「Eh? ah, I’m fine」(Melissa)

She seem’s really dazed huh. Well, maybe it’s because she doesn’t get why the maid suddenly put away the knife.
That being said, in any case.

「I don’t really care but, no, I guess I should be grateful, But still you easily backed off huh」(Hitto)

「…… “Look after her until the duel is over.” That was Master’s order」(Seira/Maid)

……Well, I guess he did say that. And she was just following orders huh.
But still she sure is loyal huh. Too loyal. She really is just like a robot.

Yea~ with beautiful black hair that flowed down to her waist, and a face that had good features.
She had large pretty eyes and although her bust was somewhat disappointing, based on appearances alone she was a Bishoujo that wouldn’t lose to Melissa but—— At any rate I can’t sense any emotion in her.

Actually. I can't sense any life left in her eyes—— at least that's what I think.

「Heey, you're name was Seira right? Aren't you miserable being that Zak guy's slave?」(Hitto)

I felt a "What bad things have you heard?" feeling coming from her though. Nonetheless I became interested in hear about it.

「……I am a slave. I am Master's property. Possessions don't have feelings such as discontent. We are just things to be used. My duty is to faithfully carry out my orders」(Seira)

……She responded in a monotone voice that really did sound like a computer program huh.
But I wonder why…… For some reason I was concerned but——

「Ano, Goshujin-sama——」(Melissa)

Hmm? Ah, oh yea, Melissa. Well, I guess I have no choice but to leave that slave alone. In the first place, I don't have enough time to be concerning myself with other people's issues right now.

And, I turned towards Melissa. For some reason she had an anxious expression on her face…… I guess that's to be expected.
The dinning hall was already a complete wreck. Since the battle has ended, the staff and cooks came out and started pointed their fingers in our direction. This doesn't look good.

「Melissa, we're escaping!」(Hitto)

With an "Eh?" I grabbed the panicking girl's right arm and began running.
As for why we have to run away, the bad thing is that even though I regard this guy named Zak as a completely muscle-headed idiot, simply put I am at a disadvantage when it comes to social standing.

After all, I am still only regarded as a [Beginner] adventurer. Even if he has a bad reputation, as an [Expert] adventurer he can gain support from many places by using absurd and unreasonable methods. I don't doubt that he has a large and extensive network of influence.

Whatever the case may be, we dashed out of the dining hall, and warding off the gazes of onlookers we ran through the inn's entrance. We continued running until we reached the shed where the wagons were parked. I had the watchman who still didn't know what was going on unlock the door that held our wagon, and Melissa and I both hopped on.

And then Melissa grabbed the reins and started driving.

「Umm, where to?」(Melissa)
「Can we go out of the city?」(Hitto)
「Eh? Uhhm the gates close at 8 o'clock at night though……」(Melissa)

If I remember correctly, when I glanced at the clock in the dining hall it was half past 7. Looks like we'll barely make it.

「Alrighty! Then we'd better hurry and get out of here. It can be helped but looks like we're spending the night outdoors today. It will be troublesome if that man found us after all」(Hitto)

「Ou-outdoors is it?」(Melissa)

「Yea-Sorry about that, the situation suddenly became like this」(Hitto)

「N-no it's completely fine. Well then, we better hurry」(Melissa)

We continued traveling until the wagon was out of the city.
The gatekeeper was a bit suspicious, but once I told him we were leaving on a request and after showed him my adventurer's license he was somehow consented and let us through for the time being.

However, the nail in the coffin was that we can't get back in past 8, but I already heard of that beforehand.

So, right now the wagon was speeding down the highway. As expected visibility was pretty bad at nighttime, but thanks to the full moon and all the stars littered across the clear night sky… at least it was better than nothing.

In reality it would have been great if I could use at least one type of magic. But that was impossible.
We didn't have a magic device or anything like a lamp. I should've bought one.

But it seems like Melissa's eyes are quite good. Rather than veering off the

dark highway, she continued to skillfully used the reins to manipulate the horses to keep them on track.

Really, Melissa's specs are way too high huh.

「So then, What shall we do next?」(Melissa)

「Let's see… I was planning to head to the Aloe Forest early in the morning. Shall we head somewhere close to there?」(Hitto)

「…… Yes, that should be fine」(Melissa)

Hmm? She still seems somewhat depressed huh.
……I guess that's to be expected. We ended up having to escape from that inn after all, and looks like we won't be able to use that same inn again.
Well, personally I've already have enough of that inn. But in the end it turned out to be a waste of money. Perhaps she ended up thinking that she was worthless again?

I'm not sure what to do…… It would be great if the request to collect Nankou Grass somehow recovered her spirits though——

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The wagon arrived at the Aloe Forest after traveling for about an hour.
I felt that it was slower than going on foot, but since it was nighttime it couldn't be helped.

Looks like the highway doesn't run through the forest huh.
Well, I guess that's to be expected. For the time being let's park the wagon at a place around the forest that doesn't stand out too much.

Looks like we'll be sleeping in the wagon today huh.
However, maybe it's because it hasn't even become 9 o'clock yet, it was too early to retire for someone like me who used to live on Earth.

Right now Melissa and I are both sitting on top of the coachman's seat. Even though our bodies weren't covered by anything, maybe because the time of year was nice, the soothing air felt neither too cold nor too warm.

The full moon in the sky, and the glimmering stars.
But…… Melissa still seemed somehow gloomy.

I wonder what it is? Would it be better if I heard her out?……

「Ano, Goshujin-sama——」(Melissa)

Then before I could ask, a voice came from her instead.
Being caught off guard I let out an “Eh?” by mistake.

「I have always been thinking about it but…… The only thing I have ever done is be an annoyance to Goshujin-sama——」(Melissa)

Hmm? What’s with this all of a sudden. An annoyance……

「What on earth are you saying? I have not once thought of you as an annoyance at you know?」(Hitto)

「……It is alright Goshujin-sama. Please do not force yourself any longer. It was because of me that we were forced to escape from that inn. And before that when I went to the bathhouse and when I entered the dining hall, and even during the duel, it was——」(Melissa)

「Melissa. You’re wrong about that. None of that was your fault to begin with. All of it was because I couldn’t stand the way those people did things and I ended up speaking up against them, all because of that. That is to say, umm… I was angry that that didn’t treat you as a human just because you were a slave. I just couldn’t put up with it」(Hitto)

Melissa was thinking way too negatively. Besides, it was something that I selfishly did, there was no reason for Melissa to think that she was a bother because of it.

「…… Goshujin-sama is a very kind person… But if you keep forcing yourself like this then I too will feel guilty about it. Please give me your honest opinion. If perhaps you tell me to disappear right this moment, then I will leave this place as you say so」(Melissa)

「What the hell are you saying!? I don’t get it at all! There’s no way I would ever tell you to just ‘get lost’!」(Hitto)

Melissa’s shoulders began trembling in surprise.
Shit, I accidentally let my tone——

「S-Sorry, I just… But that's how I really feel. That's why, even though I ended up raising my voice, I have never had thoughts like 'I want you to just go away'」(Hitto)

「……I do not understand. Master's feelings—— Why would you……」(Melissa)

Melissa lowered her head as if trying to conceal the tears building up in her eyes…… H-hey wait! Why is she!? Why is it, is it because——

「I'm sorry, Melissa. I must have caused you to worry a lot because I was so worthless. Certainly, it is to be expected that you don't have any faith in someone like me who just became an adventurer」(Hitto)

「That's not true! I have not once thought of something like that! To say that you are worthless is!-」(Melissa)

So, this time it was Melissa raising her voice. What was the reason then? Was I wrong?

「I was, Master was the one who saved me, even now I am grateful for that. You even took me in as a slave…… But in reality Master is forcing himself right? The truth is that you were forced into buying a slave like me even though you didn't want to, so you just……」(Melissa)

…… I didn't, want to buy Melissa?

「Wait a second. How did it end up like that? Like me being forced to pay for you, and that I didn't want to……」(Hitto)

Then, Melissa turned her head slightly away, and answered in a somewhat lonely voice.

「That's because, Master…… you said that you would buy me as a slave, but you originally didn't intend to do that——」(Melissa)

She responded while lightly hugging her shoulders.
I understand what she was saying but I don't remember the specific time when—— Oh I remember, it was that time……

Oh crap, I'm an idiot.
If someone heard those lines then they would definitely interpret it that way. What the hell have I done. Because of that Melissa's feelings were hurt like

this——

「Melissa, I'm so sorry! I am completely at fault!」(Hitto)

At any rate, while on the coachman's seat, I faced Melissa and lowered my head as much as I possibly could.
Whatever the case may be, for me to say something that would cause this much harm, I am disappointed in myself.

「N-Not true! Please raise your head!」(Melissa)
「No, let me stay like this. Because I didn't say it properly, I caused you to misunderstand things」(Hitto)

A soft "Eh?" managed to reach my ear.

「Didn't say, it properly?」(Melissa)

「Yea, that's right. At that time I didn't mean to say that I don't want you as a slave. But if possible I would rather have you not as a slave but as a companion instead. I said those words with that meaning in mind. It has only been a short while, but Melissa has helped me in many ways, and I've grown to like your personality. Also, you're pretty too. No, I don't mean that in a Lewd way or anything though!」(Hitto)

Having said all that, I raised my head and waved my hands back and forth in a panic.
Then Melissa met my eyes with a surprised look and—— She suddenly burst into tears.

「Wait-! I-I'm really sorry, seriously! It was my bad! If you want you can even smack——」(Hitto)
「That's not it!」(Melissa)

Melissa managed to let out a strained cry. Tears overflowed as she spoke.

「I…… I am just thinking about how happy I am right now. For Master to think of me like that…… But at the same time I could not forgive myself—— Without noticing Master's feelings, I selfishly acted in that way…… You'd definitely hate a slave like me. Eh?」(Melissa)

I unintentionally embraced Melissa. At this point you could say it's a reflex, or

just naturally spontaneous…… The Melissa who thought of such admirable things just for my sake, She's just so—— extremely lovable that I regrettably reached my arms out to her without thinking.

Isn't this a bit overkill after saying that I thought of her as just a companion? But my body moved against my will.
It's a little too late for me to 'Cancel' this feeling.

「Goshujin-sama——」(Melissa)
「Sorry Melissa. I just suddenly」(Hitto)
「No—— I'm overjoyed……」(Melissa)

I slowly let go of her body, and grasped her shoulders while looking into her eyes.

「Melissa. I've decided. I will, without a doubt, one day free you from being a slave. That is my goal」(Hitto)

「No way, but for that you need-」(Melissa)
「I know. That's why, even though it might be impossible to do right away, but still, even still, I won't give up. That's why until that time, I think that we will have continue being together as master and slave but…… I hope you will allow it」(Hitto)

'Such a thing……' Melissa shook her head. In the dim night, her illuminated golden hair resonated as it swayed.

「Even though I have received such an amazing blessing as to stay by your side as a slave, to go to such great lengths—— It really is more than what a person like me deserves……」(Melissa)

Melissa's blue eyes that were like gemstones began to dampen.
As I stared deeply into those eyes——

「For Melissa to be undeserving… I should be the one to say those words…… You're just too beautiful」(Hitto)

My hand reached out to her hair as I said this. Only it's silky feel was left on my skin.
I truly believed she was beautiful. Just looking into those pair of blue eyes made me feel like I would draw me closer.

…… And those soft cherry colored lips also looked like they would draw me in——

——Bururururuu?

Haa! This is bad! I almost! Regaining my composure I pulled away my face and averted my gaze elsewhere.
I was saved by the fact that the horses were looking this way and making noises.
That was close, I still haven't confirmed the other party's feelings…… Crap, oh crap, if this led to another misunderstanding then I won't be able to look her in the eye.

「Goshujin-sama……?」(Melissa)

「Ah, no, that is. The full moon sure is pretty huh, Melissa」(Hitto)

I spoke while trying to mislead her.
And Melissa gave a slightly half-hearted reply of "Eh? yes, I guess so"

…… Looks like it really did cause her to draw the wrong conclusion. She seemed like she was in a slightly bad mood——

I took a quick peek back at Melissa.
And she was grinning with a warm smile.

M-maybe she isn't mad after all?

「M—— my…… feel, real—— ly, don……know」(Melissa)

Hmm? Was Melissa saying something with her head held down?

「Uhhmm, Melissa? Did you say something?」(Hitto)
「Nope, nothing at all——」(Melissa)

Even though she was smiling I could sense ice cold vibes coming from her……

Sigh I guess so huh. She might be angry because she was almost kissed involuntarily……
That must be the reason. Geez, even though I knew this would happen.

Once before I thought "Maybe now's a good time" when I was with that one girl, I tried to kiss her inside the car but it turned into a dangerous situation that

felt like I would be arrested for obscenity…… She seriously burst into tears and went on a rampage—— I've had enough of that sort of thing.

Anyways I'll proceed with slowly from now on…… I can't afford anymore mistakes after all——

Chapter 16-2 “Zak’s Madness” (Side-Chapter)

Author Warning: This is the story of Zak right after Hitto beat him.
It contains portrayals of violence towards women. And may cause discomfort for those reading it.
Particularly if you are uncomfortable with seeing women be treated in a horrible manner, you will still be able to understand the main story if you skip this chapter.

「Bitch! What do you mean that guy isn’t here anymore! Why the hell’d you let them go like it was nothing!?」

Zak’s angry voice resounded throughout the dinning hall. And that anger, it was directed towards his very own slave Seira.
Zak had been unconscious for about 15 minutes since Hitto had escaped from the inn.

And after waking up and not being able to find Hitto anywhere, he learned that Hitto had disappeared from the inn from the replies of nearby employees.

「…… Just as Master had ordered, I looked after them until the duel was finished」(Seira)

Seira simply answered this in a monotone voice.
Like a doll, she faithfully replied to the contents of the question.
However, that only caused the unreasonable Zak to grow even more angry.

「Bitch, are you fking with me –koraa!」

Zak’s foot flew straight into Seira’s face as she was sitting in seiza. She simply resigned herself to being hit; without moving to avoid it, and without trying to defend against it.
Goro-goro she momentarily rolled across the floor and landed on her side, but she immediately tried to get back up and sit back in a seiza.

However, immediately after Zak violently grabbed Seira by her long hair,

forcefully held her up, and with his rock-like fists, he continuously beat her over and over and over and over and over again.

Even though the other person was a slave, Zak's actions had left all the onlookers speechless.

「A-ano, Zak-sama——」

A single man called out to Zak. He was the man entrusted with managing this inn. In the event that trouble broke out, then he would be the man in charge of dealing with it.

Earlier, he had just finished stopping a man from sending his slave into the bathhouse by herself.
Although the manager was scared of that man's threatening mannerisms and ran away at the time, his actions evidently ended up stopping that man as a result. Volunteering himself to keep the violent actions of troublesome guests in check, one could say it was his strong point.

And currently standing behind the manager was the girl who served food to Hitto, the man Zak was searching for.
That being said, a certain quarrel earlier resulted in the food being scattered around

As for the girl, she personally wanted not to get wrapped up in this matter, But simply because she was the one who brought water and the food to that Hitto guy, because of that reason alone she was treated as an involved party.

But since she scared nonetheless, she stood behind the manager with her shoulders slightly shaking.
Nevertheless, Zak stopped the hand he was using to beat the slave, and turned his sharp gaze towards the manager.

「Huh? The hell do you want, bastard! You got a problem with the way a treat my slave huh!?」

Zak barked back at him. The man straightened his back and thrust out both hands and waved them.
As he desperately tried to convey that that wasn't the case, cold sweat began

accumulating on his forehead.

「No, no, by no means. I have absolutely no way I would have complaints about the way Zak-sama treats his slaves. It's just that, well, the damages this time are… No! Of course I'm not saying that Zak-sama is a fault, however… even if only a little, C-could you perhaps give us compensation——」(Manager)

The manager kept his waist low, looking exactly like the insectoid monster "Jaw-swinging Locust", ingratiatingly nodding his head a little and with a forced smile he asked Zak.
The man was desperately trying to fulfill his duty as a manager.

「Compensation you say? Why should I? Isn't it fine this way? I think things still look pretty good like this」(Zak)
「Ahaha. I-Indeed it does. It's just.. with things like this… As I am the manager, the things that happen right in front of me, so you know……」(Manager)

Right at that moment, the manager closed his mouth. Or rather, his mouth was forced shut.
The reason was because Zak's greatsword brushed right past his head from the side.
Even though the sword can be said to have brushed past, the part of the manager that was from the neck up now smashed into the wall on the opposite side of the room, and fell to the floor. The face still smiling courteously.

The remaining part below the neck fell down to the floor with a thud. A thick, blackish scarlet stream spread and colored the floor.

「K, ky, kyaa——」
「If you scream I'll fucking kill youuuuuuu!」(Zak)

Zak's rough voice sounded. The voices that were about to rise from the onlookers were suppressed by that voice, and silence ruled the dining hall.
The people who remained in the now completely tattered dining hall were cowering, shaking with fear.

「Hmph. By the way, missy. You saw it, right? It was an accident that the manager's head flew off, right~?」(Zak)

The waitress girl had been brought to her knees by overwhelming fear, and

was now sitting on the floor as Zak asked her.
In front of her eyes lay the headless manager. The streaming blood dirtied her palms and the buttocks of her clothing.

But as if she wasn't even aware of that, her breath was going "hi! hi!" as if she were having convulsions, and she couldn't utter a single word.
On top of that, between her thighs an aromatic liquid trickled and spread out.
It seems she was so overwhelmed with the situation that she had wet herself.
The translucent liquid that flowed from her mixed with the scarlet on the floor, producing an indescribable foul smell that spread throughout the surroundings.

「…… Tsk, you have quite the loose cunt huh? But that just turns me on!」(Zak)

But Zak was, after having his nose twitch, he said those words with a grin that spread to the corners of his mouth. He placed his hands on his waist and lowered his pants, and as the girl's eyes widened in shock, he flung himself onto her——

「Hick, hick, so, cruul. I can't believe… feh, hii…」

The waitress' apron was thrown to the side, her clothes and underwear got ripped apart, exposing her white skin and fairly developed twin hills, the woman lay sobbing alone on the floor.
Her body covered with blue bruises that weren't there just a moment ago.

Afterwards, the blood that colored the floor also contained the remains of a deflowering.

While looking down upon such a miserable girl, Zak put his pants back on, and with a refreshed expression he opened his mouth.

「Well I suppose that cleared away a bit of my anger」(Zak)

Glaring with bloodthirsty eyes at the woman who he had just now ravaged in the dining hall,
「Hey, I'll ask you only once more. The manager died in an accident, and you wanted it so we did it. Am I clear?」
He asked once more, with a beast-like growling voice.

"Hick, yes, thash, right. Itsh ash Zak-sama, hick, saysh」(Waitress)

Hearing those words, Zak gave a satisfied expression, his mouth opened widely

in a laugh.

「Umm, Zak-sama——」

The female innkeeper who was responsible for the inn spoke.
Her face had a stiff smile.

「Huh? What is it? Could it that you got a problem with me——」(Zak)
「No! Nothing like that! I just thought that perhaps you should return to your room…… after all you'll stand out if you stay here……」

It seems that the woman's words were able to persuade Zak, he nodded once but he glared at the woman.

「Alright, I'll return to my room. But if you find that man you absolutely have to tell me! Understood?」(Zak)
「Ye-yes, but of course!」

He snorted a "hmph!" in response to the woman, then—— he turned towards Seira and kicked her with all his strength. Her delicate body met the floor without any feeling of resistance.

「Oi! Call somebody who can use healing magic to my room afterwards! This one won't die easily, but she can be injured!」(Zak)

「Ye-yes, understood!」

Desperately resisting her body shaking, the innkeeper lowered her head toward Zak, expressing her compliance.

Then, without mercy, Zak once more grabbed Seira's messy hair, and while dragging her across the ground, he left the dining hall.

Repeatedly throwing her body violently against the wall, Zak's face was brimming with joy.

「Seira, you bitch, I'm not done with you yet. Cuz from now until morning, I'm gonna be training you properly in my room!」(Zak)

Chapter 17 “Although We Came to Collect Herbs”

「Goshujin-sama—— Goshujin-sama」

「Mm…… Ah, Good morning Melissa」

In the morning I was able to wake up to Melissa’s tender call.
Her gentle mannerisms are very comforting. Furthermore, the scenery spread before my eyes was of the risen sun gently glistening in the sky.

Hmm, looks like I feel asleep without even realizing it.
After that incident yesterday, I told Melissa to go get some sleep but she responded with “It is unacceptable for me to sleep while Master stays awake” and thus decided not to rest. So in the end I talked to her about various things while trying to get her drowsy. We talked for a long time but——

Who would’ve thought, for me to be the one who fell asleep instead… Truly pathetic.

「Sorry about that, Melissa. You haven’t slept right? Are you alright?」(Hitto)
「Yes. I often didn’t get to sleep much when I was with my previous Master so I am used to it」(Melisssa)

…… I-I see, with the previous one. Y-yea. I guess so, since she was a slave and all.
L-Let’s not pry too deeply into that matter.

「!? Y-you are mistaken! It was for work! Since I did various things like accounting, I meant that during certain times of the year it would be so busy that I didn’t have the free time to sleep! I did not mean it in that sort of way!」(Melissa)

Huh? Was it showing on my face? Melissa is panicking quite a bit.
Hmm, for some reason, Melissa was acting cute.

「Hmm? I'm mistaken? About what? I haven't said anything yet, but what do you mean by "that"?」(Hitto)

I felt like teasing her, and faced with this question she responded, "T-That is…" with her eyes cast down to hide her bright-red face.
It's cute but maybe I went a bit too far.

「My bad, My bad, it was a joke. Sorry about that」(Hitto)

「…… Oh Goshujin-sama, you're so meeaaan」(Melissa)

With a *Pui* Melissa made a pouting gesture.
Yea, that gesture is something that shouldn't be done in the morning. That facial expression has way too much destructive power.

「But seriously, Don't push yourself too hard okay?」(Hitto)
「I am fine, after all, I'm really not forcing myself. Besides that, Goshujin-sama. I believe that it would be best if we started completing the request by now」(Melissa)

Hmm? Oh yea that. I kinda went with the flow and told Melissa about it yesterday, but we came here today to collect Nankou Grass huh.
I originally planned to go first thing in the morning but, judging by the position of the sun, quite a bit of time must have passed.
Was it around 8 or 9 in the morning? This is a bit inconvenient so let's buy a clock next time.

Well whatever. We should still have plenty of time left.
I feel a bit sorry for Melissa for not being able to eat breakfast but…… Actually we never got to eat dinner either. I was somehow able to endure it though.

「Aren't you hungry Melissa? You sure you're okay?」(Hitto)

「I really am alright. You as well, Goshujin-sama, you didn't have anything to eat last night too, right?」(Melissa)

「Yea. Well, that's true but I'm good. Well, there's no way for us to get a meal out here anyways. Sorry, Melissa. In exchange let's get something tasty to eat when we get back to town」(Hitto)

Hearing me say that, she replied "Yes" with a smile on her face.

Yup, my motivation is really going up.
Well then, we proceeded to complete the request but the problem was the wagon huh.

Maybe, will it fit in the Magic Bag? First let's have Melissa get off to test it out. But, as expected storing living things is impossible.

If it was the wagon box alone then maybe it was possible, but then there would still be the matter of the what to do with the horses so in the end they were treated as one item.
It can't be helped so a bit before we enter the forest, Let's find an appropriate tree and tie the wagon to it.
After all, the rope was already packed in the wagon to begin with.

「Well then, I guess we should head out for now」(Hitto)
「Umm, should I perhaps look after the wagon instead?」(Melissa)
「That won't do. After all, I can't have my precious Melissa going through something like yesterday again. Besides, it will take some time to complete the harvesting anyways」(Hitto)

「 "Pprecious"—— that makes me happy……」(Melissa)

Blushing, she said it in a quiet voice, but I could clearly hear it so I felt a bit embarrassed.
Well whatever, This will be my first request as an adventurer since coming to this world, Let's try our best.

◇◆◇

…… I was too careless. It was completely beyond my calculations. To think that something like this would happen——
Truth be told, all of this is making me hate my own negligence.

「G-Goshujin-sama——」

Melissa also looked distressed. I guess that's to be expected, in front of me right now was a massive number of men, No there are some women too.
Anyways it looks like we're gonna end up in a pinch right after starting our first request. After all——

「Hey! There's Nankou Grass growing over there too! You, go over dere

instead!」
「Don't lie to me! Da only thing growing over dere is Penpen Grass! I ain't gonna be tricked dat easily!」
「Hey, you! I'm the one who found that Nankou grass first!」
「Shaddup! First come first serve, idiot!」
「My (watashi) granny's got a fatal illness! She needs this Nankou grass no matter what, Will you please give me some?」
「Eh? Oh, then, I guess I've got no choice right? Here…… Hey! Nankou grass can only be used as ingredients for simple ointments!」
「Chii-, I got found out!」
「While we're at it, that guy's a Dude you know」
「「「「Whaaaaaaaaat!?」」」」

Well, as you can see, the scene before me felt just like a battlefield.
Over 100 adventurers were ruthlessly fighting over this so-called Nankou grass.
Yea, what the hell is this?

「Goshujin-sama. Will we really be able to collect some Nankou grass here……」(Melissa)

Melissa turned towards me while looking concerned.
Even if you look at me like that… this really was outside of my expectations.
After all, back in the game, adventurers never gathered like this just to collect herbs.

Still, if gathering was this unreliable then hunting would've been better. From what I heard from the Guild, they will buy the raw materials you get from defeating monsters. Collecting herbs just ends up like this.

In the game era monster hunting grounds tended to spawn where Players gathered very often, and looking at the current situation there is a high possibility that those conditions were replicated.

This is giving me a headache. Even though I was told I could make some money…

「For the time being, Melissa. Let's move away from here. Either way, with all these adventurers scrambling around here we won't be able to collect a decent amount」(Hitto)

Having said that, I took Melissa to go and search for a different place to harvest.
And, the scene that we found was…

「It’s ah Green Rabiiiit! Guy’s, we’re gonna corner iiit!」
「Don’t try and steal it! We’re the ones huntin iiiit!」

…… That sorta scene.
By the way [Green Rabbit] is an emerald-green colored wild rabbit.
That’s all it is. It really is just a green colored rabbit.
No, back in the game it was just small-fry so maybe that’s why I view it that way.
But now that it’s become real I seriously can’t see it as anything but a simple green-colored rabbit.

With that single green rabbit as their opponent, numerous parties of adventurers were hunting it.
Honestly it was quite pitiful. Of course, for the rabbit.
By the way the raw materials from the rabbit where it’s very own meat.
Apparently, the color of the fur was ugly so it was worthless.

Well whatever. Besides, I don’t really feel like getting mixed up in something like that anyways.
And so, Melissa and I decided to walk around some more and see if there were any suitable places

Melissa and I continued walking through the forest in search of Nankou Grass, but regardless of the location a large number of adventurers would be gathered there, it was pretty terrible.

And although I figured that we could at least hunt some monsters, since there were a bunch of adventurers trying to scramble to get the monsters in this area, I doubt we’ll be able to get any for ourselves.
More precisely, it may be possible to get some but there was no merit in it.
In the game, the enemies in this forest would’ve served as the main hunting grounds for fledgling adventurers who were just starting out.

Basically, the monsters that spawn here are so weak that you won’t be able to earn much money from them.
I read a bit of the raw monster materials list from the Guild, but it seems that the

raw materials you get from the monsters in this forest aren't that impressive so you can't make good money.

But still, if the situation wasn't this bad then maybe defeating a bunch of monsters might add up to a little. But in a situation like this where adventurers are swarming after monsters, I don't feel like it would be possible.

And since all these adventurers are so earnestly on the hunt, doing something unsightly like using 'Cancel' on all of them is something I'd rather not do.
And besides, using 'Cancel' on so many people in this crowded place would certainly stand out.

Well, because of that, half way through it kinda felt like Melissa and I were walking around the forest while on a picnic.
Since the density of the trees wasn't too thick, you could see the sky. And beautiful flowers were starting to bloom.
If you don't think about the whole request thing (and if you don't pay attention to all the hustle and bustle caused by it) then you could say that this is a pretty nice walking path.

There's no threat of monsters after all. Because these adventurers are defeating them all of their own accord.

「This place sure is lovely huh, Melissa」(Hitto)
「Eh? Ah, yes it is Goshujin-sama. But is this really alright? At this rate the request will end without us completing it……」(Melissa)

Melissa is too serious. Just when it started to feel a bit dreamy she pulls us right back to reality.
It's a bit frustrating so let's stare at her profile.

「S-staring at me so intensely like that is embarrassing——」(Melissa)

Yup this girl, being green is some areas is good too. Melissa that is.

「Hmm?」(Melissa)

After that, we walked for a little bit until Melissa noticed something and let out

a voice.

「Something the matter?」(Hitto)
「Yes, Goshujin-sama. Please take a look at that」(Melissa)

Melissa used her elegant and slender finger to point out the way, and my attention shifted to that direction.
And then, I saw a place with abundant amounts of Nankou Grass growing there——

Chapter 18 “The Manager of Herbs”

No way!? Melissa and I ran over to get a closer look, and realized that it wasn’t an illusion.

「This really is an impressive amount. Well done, Melissa!」(Hitto)
「T-that praise is more than I deserve! Thank you very much」(Melissa)

Melissa rejoiced in a lively tone. Still, it was honestly an impressive feat. To think that there would be much Nankou Grass just sitting here untouched.
Is this what you would call a Hidden Spot? Well, in any case it’s a godsend.
I was just about to work hard with Melissa to harvest the Nankou Grass when——

「Hey! What the hell are you bitches doing!」

As we leaned over to pick some Nankou Grass, someone’s voice reverberated from behind.
Judging by the situation, were those words directed towards us?

While having a hunch that this would end up being troublesome, I stood up and turned around.
And the first thing I saw was—— As usual, a trio of men were standing shoulder-to-shoulder.
In addition, these Three all had the exact same face.
Maybe they were triplets? The Three all had rectangular faces with unkempt black beards growing out of them.

Their hair was also left to grow out in every direction. Judging by that, you can assume that they surely didn’t care about their outward appearance.
On their bodies was armor made of leather. In their hands: hatchets
I’m pretty sure that they are Adventurers, but they don’t seem very strong.

So, I wonder what exactly is making these guys so pissed off.

「What are we doing? Just collecting some Nankou Grass over here to

complete a request」(Hitto)

In any case, I nonchalantly answered the question.
By now Melissa's movements have already stopped.
Well, it's probably because the excessive scowls of those guys are starting to have an effect on her.

「The hell'd you say? You bastards saying that you're trying to harvest what's rightfully ours without asking first!? You little bitch!」(Triplet)

…… Huh? What's theirs?

「What are you talking about? I honestly don't know what you're talking about, but are you trying to say that you have ownership over this Nankou Grass?」(Hitto)

「Yea, das right. Still, for you bitches to accept that request and come here not knowing about us, you're a newbie right?」(Triplet)

「…… Well, I just registered yesterday after all」(Hitto)

Although, the thing about being a newbie at collecting herbs and shit like that is something you determined on your own.

「Hmph! No wonder」
「Seriously, newbies sure do some reckless things sometimes huh」
「Even after we keep tell'n da guys around here to absolutely not come near too」

The Triplets suddenly started talking about various things. But still, are these guys really that famous? Better yet, to be begin with.

「Before that, I've got a question. When you guys claimed that this Nankou Grass was yours, in other words, do you mean to say that you have ownership over this particular lot of forest land? You're saying that you have the authority over it, right?」(Hitto)

「Don't be stupid, dis forest ain't belong to no one」

……No, in that case then I'm even more confused at what you said earlier.

「If this forest belongs to no one, then that means that this Nankou Grass doesn't belong to you, right?」(Hitto)

「Huh? What, are you an idiot?」
「If he ain't got it by now then maybe his brain melted?」
「Geez, does he not get it unless we explain it one point at a time? This is why idiots are always…」

For some reason this kinda felt like one of those "Yare-yare" moments, But I'm pretty sure that you're the ones saying strange things, most definitely.

「Guess we got no choice, We'll give ya a proper Lecture」
「Listen up, Open up yer ears and pay close attention!」
「We've been collecting Nankou Grass in this spot for over 4 years now!」
「And as a result of us only collecting this Nankou Grass!」
「We're veterans who've climbed up to the rank of Manager!」
「Earning the other Adventurer's admiration and respect, We are called as!」
「「「THE GREEN THREE STARS!」」」

……For some reason, the trio struck a pose as if plucking herbs and smiled as if they were being photographed…… No, that's not cool at all, you know.
In the first place, what's up with that "Green Three Stars" thing. Tri-stars that are green-colored? Nothing awaits you in the future except for being a stepping stone.

Nevertheless, to become Manager Rank by only doing this job…… No, that must impressive, I'm sure.
But, is that something to be proud of? There must've been something else for you to do.

「Well, in other words」

Ah, so you stopped posing huh. Wait, your faces are blushing. If it's embarrassing then don't do it.

「This hunting ground for Nankou Grass is our holy ground where we've been harvesting for many years!」
「In other words, it's our turf! Our territory!」
「Das why all the Nankou Grass in dis area!」
「It's resounding proof dat it rightfully belongs to us!」
「And we ain't gonna let other adventurers trample on dis soil!」
「Da only ones who can pick this Nankou Grass is us alone!」

「「「If you get it, then hurry up and get lost~! Get lost~!」」」

「G-Goshujin-sama……」(Melissa)

As expected, Melissa is making a nervous expression.
Well, in any case these guys really are a nonsensical bunch huh.
All the same, there's no way to satisfy these guys
In short, 'We've been harvesting here for years so it already belongs to us,' is what these guys are trying to say, right?
Are you stupid!? If that was a valid reason, then anyone can go around saying 'This is mine' and 'That is mine'.

Basically, what there's no evidence to support what these guys are saying. It's nothing but simple bullying.
If that's the case, then I don't have a reason to follow along with it.

That being said, these people seem like the type of guys who would give in if you honestly confronted them.
Here I should proceed rationally.

「I get what you're saying. By the way, I have a question but, is it officially recognized that you guys have accepted this request?」(Hitto)

「? Ain't that sorta thing is obvious」
「If we didn't accept da request then why da hell would we be doing this」
「Our job is to harvest these herbs, bring it to the guild, and get our reward.」

「I see, that's good」(Hitto)

I showed the group a nice smile.

「Well then, that request—— Cancel! Cancel! Cancel!」(Hitto)

「Huh? What the hell are you Cancel……」
「Hmm? Why are we here?」
「Nah, its for umm 'that', right? Uhmmm」

「What, did you guys come here without a reason?」(Hitto)

I casually asked the trio who looked like they had question marks all over their faces.

「Ah, yeaaa……」

「I see, then you guys don't particularly have any problem with what we're doing, right?」(Hitto)

「Hmm? Ah, yea, I guess so」
「I don't really get it but…… let's go home」
「Guess so……」

And with that, the trio trudged their way back to the city.
Yup, that worked out smoothly.

Incidentally, the thing that I used just now was [Request Cancel].
It was one of the Cancel Skills that existed back in the game.
Well, the effects a self-explanatory but it allows you to freely Cancel requests.

Now that I think about it, at first there were a large number of people who thought, "What's the point of this Skill?"
However, one of the special features of this Cancel was that it allowed you to not take a Penalty.
A "Penalty" is a punishment assigned when you fail a request, or if you otherwise give-up on it.

Unless you were extremely stupid, you wouldn't go and accumulate a bunch of requests just to have them expire and make you have to pay a fine.
But if you used this [Request Cancel] then you could arbitrarily Cancel the request and not receive a Penalty.

……Speaking of which that Cat-Girl receptionist… She didn't tell me about the Penalty.
Does this world not have it? …… No, for her there's the very likely possibility that she simply forgot to mention it.
Well whatever, It's fine as long as you don't fail after all.

Well anyways, up until now is how the skill is normally used.
However, This Skill… If you hastily formed a Party and used it while on a mission then terrible things will happen.
Because of that, a terrible atrocity was born.
Unbelievably, this Skill not only affected yourself but also on other Players if used this way.

Basically, this meant that you could Cancel another Player's request against

their will.
There were certain valuable requests that would give you Rare rewards for completing them, But in the game it was still necessary for you to return to the Guild in order to receive your rewards.
Because of that, there were a portion of Cancellers who would lie in wait in front of the Guild, and they would ambush other Players who had just came back in high spirits after completing a request. They ran rampant and went around harassing people by Cancelling their requests.

And this became yet another reason as to why the already unfortunate job of Canceller became even further despised.
That being said, it wasn't like you can Cancel a request whenever you felt like it. Requests like escorting and such can only be Cancelled when they just begin.
However, Cancellation will without a doubt work on subjugation types and harvest types. And since Rare rewards often come from these sorts of requests it was excessively wicked.

Well since it's a Skill like that, I doubt I'll be using it on guys who are earnestly doing their work.
But it should be fine to use it on people like that bunch who went around babbling about their own stupid and egocentric ideas.

「Alrighty then. With this we can harvest without any hindrances」(Hitto)
「Y-yes, that seems so…… Incidentally, was just now another one of Goshujin-sama's Magics?」(Melissa)

「Yea, well, it's similar to it」(Hitto)
「I thought so! As expected of Goshujin-sama! Goshujin-sama really is magnificent!」(Melissa)

Well if you put it like that then I'd feel a bit embarrassed.
Well for the time being, Melissa and I proceeded to uproot and gather all of the Nankou Grass that was within the area that those guy were blabbering about.
There was quite a large amount but we just stuffed it all into the Magic Bag. This should be good enough to meet the requirements of the request.
Yup, Job Well Done, Job Well Done——

Chapter 19 “There’s No Wagon”

Now that the nuisances were gone, Melissa was trying her very best to collect Nankou Grass. While indulging in the occasionally exposed cleavage, and catching glances of thighs showing through the gaps in the Mirage Dress, I vigorously and enthusiastically collected medical herbs.

The result—— We finished the job faster than I had anticipated. Around the time when the sun had just passed it’s midpoint, we had completely harvested everything within the plot of land that those three guys had sectioned off and boasted about.

Exactly how much did we harvest, I took out to Magic Bag to have a look. At a point inside the tiny Nankou Grass had formed a mountain of greens.
Rather than grams, the weight had already reached the realm of kilos.
Was it approximately 30 kg? Since 10 grams goes for 50 Gold, this much Nankou Grass could turn into 150,000 Gold.

「Quite a harvest wasn’t it」(Hitto)

「Yes, And this was all thanks to Goshujin-sama’s abilities!」(Melissa)

Well, I honestly don’t think that I did much. But since her eyes were sparkling as she said it, I couldn’t really deny it.

「For now, since it looks like there’s nothing left to pick, I guess we should go back to town for a bit. After all, I’d like to get some lunch too」
「Yes, Goshujin-sama」

And thus, Melissa and I headed back to the place where we tied up and left the wagon. But——

「The wagon’s…… not here, huh」(Hitto)
「Ah, Auuuu~」

Melissa let out a cry as if she was about to burst into tears.
By the way, it wasn’t because we were stupid enough to forget where we left the

wagon.
The truth is that the wagon actually was here. That much I'm certain about.
And it was not because the horses managed to escape by some chance.

As for why I was certain about this——

「This rope…… It has traces showing that something cut it——」(Hitto)

That's right, at the cross-sections of the rope there are traces that some sharp object cut it.
In other words, it means that the horses didn't go wild and somehow managed to break the rope.
Someone had cut the rope and rode away with both the horses and the wagon.

「I am terribly sorry, Goshujin-sama! If only I had looked after it properly!」(Melissa)

Melissa lowered her head many times over. But she is placing too much of the blame on herself.

「There's no need to apologize. This was a mistake on my part. Besides, I am relieved from the bottom of my heart that I didn't leave you here, Melissa. I have no idea what kind of danger you would've faced if I left you here after all. If something happened to my precious Melissa then I would regret it and never stop feeling sorry about it」(Hitto)

Melissa's cheeks were slightly flushed. It's cute that she's embarrassed from being called precious.

「But still, looks like there are people who would steal a wagon with no belongings whatsoever in it huh」(Hitto)

Melissa was carrying the Magic Bag after all. That's why the wagon didn't have a single piece of cargo still loaded in it.

「Even though it would be as a single item, it would have been possible to sell it so…… Tornelo's wagon seemed like it had been through a considerable amount of use, but even still. The established selling price of the wagon itself was 50,000 Gold, and I believe the price of a single horse would have been close to 15,000 Gold」(Melissa)

There's that too huh. Since you weren't able to buy wagons back in the game I never learned their value.
But if that's the case then the wagon itself would go for 50,000 and the horses would go for 15,000 x 4 a piece so that's 60,000 Gold. Totaling 110,000 Gold huh.

It really seems like good money huh. Using the Recall Stones from earlier as an example, it seems like the purchasing price would be 3 times as much as the selling price. Going by that, this wagon's value would become 330,000 Gold in total. Well, if you compare it to a used car then the price isn't much different.

Well, whatever the case——

「I am registered as the owner of the wagon, right? If it's like that then wouldn't we be able to track it down if someone sells it?」(Hitto)

「Yes, that is why the wagon thief will most likely not use the legal route」(Melissa)

Not legally…… I see, so it's that way.

「The Thieves Guild huh……」(Hitto)
「yes……」(Melissa)

With downcast eyes, Melissa answered as if she was seriously referring to something disgusting.
She must have a considerable amount of hostility towards it.

Well, I guess that's to be expected. By the way, the Thieves Guild is… well it's a bit self-explanatory but it's kind of like an underground guild where the guys gathered there are people who make a living off doing theft jobs.

This was also a part of the System in the game but, even though it was called the "Thieves" Guild, it doesn't mean that you won't be able to enter the Guild unless you are a Thief-Class.
To begin with, the Adventurer's Guild provided jobs for Thief-class people as well. Those people looked like Treasure Hunters because of their large profiles.

Basically the Thieves Guild was a business where anyone could register with regardless of your class.
And the inner workings of the Thieves Guild were appropriate for it's name.

Requests ranging from stealing to kidnapping, From wagon robberies to even participating in large-scale acts of terrorism, Things like that.
And other than those requests this Guild was solely responsible for the trafficking of stolen goods.

Within the game, many people smitten with curiously registered with the Thieves Guild because of these unconventional and peculiar missions.
Especially the Synchronized requests that received considerable praise.

Synchronized requests were linked to regular formal requests; You could say that when an legitimate request was made then the underground Thieves Guild would create a related request for it. If adventurer's had an escorting request then the opposing thieves would have a kidnapping one. It was similar to that kind of experience.

That was pretty much the Thieves Guild. However, there were of course risks involved with doing jobs for the Thieves Guild.
The biggest risk was that once you registered with the Thieves Guild you could no longer conduct business as an adventurer.
Aside from that there apparently existed a hidden parameter in the game called criminal points. If these accumulated then while you were in the city it would be blatantly displayed so that you couldn't walk around. And in the worst possible scenarios people with serious crimes would be given the Death Penalty ('Character Lost') after being arrested.

But in this world that had become reality I'm not sure if entering the Thieves Guild gets you excommunicated from being an adventurer.
To sum it up, I bet it's fine as long as you don't get caught.
Well, if people did find out about your connections with the Thieves Guild then the repercussions might be handled in a cruel and "realistic" way.

Speaking of underground guilds there was also the Assassination Guild huh.
Well, same as before this was a guild that took assassination requests.
Well, the strange thing is that the requesting clients were Players though.
With the exclusion of starting players, other Players who accumulated large sums of money could make an assassination request. The people who accepted the request would then conduct actions in order to PK the assassination target.
Naturally there were associated risks with being found out though.

Well, nevertheless this was simply knowledge I had of the game. There is the possibility that both the Thieves Guild and the Assassination Guild underwent various changes when this world became real.
After all, the Assassination Guild is most likely no longer restricted to only killing their targets.

But the basics should still be the same. It shouldn't be wrong to assume that the stolen wagon should be headed immediately to the Thieves Guild in order to be put on the market. If that's the case then——

「That means that the stolen wagon is most likely headed to the city's Slums huh……」(Hitto)

「Yes, that is correct. But to reach that conclusion in an instant, as expected of Goshujin-sama!」(Melissa)

Well, I've got the game knowledge after all.
The "Slums"…… Even in the game, they would always exist in cities that were of large size.

Well, it was pretty much both the "poor people district" as well as the city's dark side. That's because the underground guilds like the Thieves Guild and the Assassination Guild were establish inside the Slums.
So within the Slums was pretty unique. In a way, it was place with a different set of laws that was often overlooked.

After all, the public rules did not apply to the Slum quarters. PvP was also allowed in the Slum quarters so there wasn't any consequences for it. There's no one to complain to about theft either (By the way, there were also skills associated with thievery).
A domain with trickery and the worst forms of deceit, the very definition of "underground". That was the Slums.

his was stories from the game, but the real-life version should be similar. Incidentally it was possible to enter the Slums through the front entrance, but there would always exist some hidden backdoor or other underhanded trick to get in.
If your criminal points went up then you wouldn't be able to blatantly waltz through the front door after all.

As such it was standard to use something like a hidden passageway, or otherwise they would bribe the same gatekeeper with money.
And if I remember correctly Central Arts was the latter—— Using money to bribe guards should be the preferred method.
Well then, if that's the case—— It should be possible to track them using the information we've gathered.

「Goshujin-sama…… Hiya!」(Melissa)

Since she was pretty despondent, Once I stroked Melissa's head her eyes widened with surprise.
And her face looked like it was about to melt.

I've petted her many times before but it really seems like she's weak to it huh. It's fine since I'm do it but, if she makes this face for some other guy then I probably won't be able to stand it.
Well even still, I can't exactly order her to do something like "Don't let other guys pet you!" I would seem like a jealous man if I did that so I'd rather not.

「Melissa, be at ease. I will take back the wagon. There's no need for you to worry about it」(Hitto)

「Eh, but Goshujin-sama, in that case you will have to go to the Slum district……」(Melissa)

Watching her make a concerned face like that pains me a bit.
But of course her worries are unnecessary.

「It will be all right, just believe in me. Besides that, it would be best if we hurried up huh. We'll be returning to the city using a slightly special method so I'm going to grab your hand okay?」(Hitto)

「Eh? Ah!?」

I tightly held onto Melissa's hand. When I looked at Melissa's face she was looking down while seeming awfully embarrassed.
But right now isn't the time to be indulging in that.

First of all I led Melissa out of the forest.

Once we got out I headed towards a nice secluded plain.
If it's this place then it's possible to use That. It was clearly displayed among the skills in my head so it should work.

「Ano, Goshujin-sama. What exactly are you…?」(Melissa)

While her hand was being firmly clasped, Melissa offered up what seemed to be a question.
Well, you'll understand once you see it.

I focused my consciousness on a single point, and once again stepped forward with Melissa—— In that instant, Cancel!

「……Eh? EHHHHHHHHHHHH!」(Melissa)

Melissa seems quite surprised huh. Well it's to be expected. But still, the skill was a splendid success.
By the way, the surrounding forest scenery from before was now several hundred meters away from us.

In other words, from Melissa's point of view, I bet she is a bit taken aback by the sensation similar to being suddenly teleported. But still, that isn't exactly incorrect.

What I used just now was a skill called [Step Cancel].
In the game it was a movement technique where you could transfer your character to a travel point that you would determine by clicking your mouse.
This was the type that was typically used in net games—— But this skill, the so-called 'method of transfer' is moving to a point and then Cancelling it leaving only the result.

Basically the moment when this skill is activated, you get sent flying towards your determined landmark in a similar way to what Melissa would call 'teleportation'.
Furthermore, since it was a skill there was no magic incantation involved. Even among a Canceller's skills this particular one was remarkably excellent.

But for this skill whose transfer mechanism was simply sending you to a place and leaving you at the result, it isn't a skill that would let you move through something like a wall. It can only send you towards the original resulting

destination after all.
And in the case where you were to use Skip Cancel along with other people, it was not possible to move past the people in front of you.
The effect radius was also limited to a certain degree. This was probably due to the limitations of the game itself, but when I used it just now it seems to have around a 500 meter radius huh.

And again, the target you use the Cancel on is yourself.
But if you are holding hands with someone at that time, then the person you are connected with will also gain the benefits.
This was a small trick from the game, this possibility was discovered with people used the Communication systems to join hands with someone to test out if it worked.

And since it was among the original restrictions of things I couldn't use it on, it was impossible to use Step Cancel on things like the wagon.
And if I used it while carrying something like heavy equipment then the effective radius would be reduced as a result.

Afterwards it was necessary to pay attention to the stamina consumption as well. Since you are left at the resulting destination, on top of the amount of stamina used up if you were to go there normally, there was additional consumption added on when you use this skill.

「T-To think that Goshujin-sama would be able to use Transportation Magic like this——」(Melissa)

Even so, Melissa is pretty surprised huh. But still, I had expect her to think of it as magic though.
When I asked her about transfer magics before she did tell me that transportation magic existed after all.

That's why I decided to nod as if saying 'Yup, that's exactly what it was'.

Well then, with this our travel time could be greatly reduced. Just you wait, ye thieves! I'll make you regret stealing the wagon from me!

Chapter 20 “Let’s Buy Information”

By using Step Cancel multiple times, Melissa and I arrived at a place close to the city’s western gate.
It didn’t even take more than five minutes to travel here.

「Using magic like this so many times without exhausting your magic power… Goshujin-sama is far too amazing——」(Melissa)

Melissa was honestly surprised by it. Though, in the end this skill doesn’t use magic power.
Well, be that as it may, the reason why I choose the western gate was because it was the closest to the slums.
After all, the gatekeepers that you would have to bribe back in the game were stationed at the western gate.

As such, I approached the western gate together with Melissa. Since it was a rare opportunity, I continued to hold onto her hand. Just a little bonus.

「Ey, show me yer IDs」

…… Yea, before us was a gatekeeper with immorality clearly showing on his face.
With his belly exposed, an expression like a rock, and puffy eyelids, he was a terrible guy with a gaze that made him seem like an idiot.
Geez, please don’t let anyone like this become a gatekeeper.

「Here’s my adventurer’s certificate. This girl is a slave named Melissa so there should be no problem with me bringing her along, right?」(Hitto)

Melissa had completely hidden herself in my shadow while slightly shaking. Since she was clenching my hand really tight, I guess she was pretty afraid.

「Hmph! Adventurer eh. *Tsk*, no money in dat huh. Well wat ever, get a move on」(gatekeeper)

It doesn’t cost money huh…… For adventurers, as long as you have a certificate

then there is no need to check your luggage after all. So I guess the gatekeeper was depressed since he couldn't embezzle money under the guise of "taxation" huh.
Seriously, he really gives off the vibe of dirty money…… But if that's the case then.

「Say, before that I would like to hear a couple things from you, is that alright?」(Hitto)

「Hah? I don' really wana, sounds troublesome. Hurry up and get going, I gotta take care of da next guy in line」(gatekeeper)

That was obviously a lie. After all, this guy's appearance causes the jitters so there was no one behind me to begin with.

「Well, I wouldn't do something so cold-hearted. I was planning on treating you to some "thanks", so how about it?」(Hitto)

As I said that, a twisted smile peeked out as the man broadly grinned.
Seriously, this guy's way too easy to understand.

「Ey, Ima take dis guy in for a bit of inspection. You, deal with things here by yourself for a bit」(gatekeeper)

And so I left the gate, and was taken to a place that was in the shade of the rampart walls.

「So? what did ya wanna know」(gatekeeper)

He pretty shamelessly folded his arms as if boasting. While impatiently tapping down his finger, he was displaying some really arrogant mannerisms.
However, well, it was within my expectations. If this man was "prepared" beforehand by the guys in the Thieves Guild, then naturally it would be better to have a man who acts all arrogant so that he is looked down on and overlooked.

「Yea, truth is——」(Hitto)
「Hold up, before that」(gatekeeper)

He cut me off with a low tone of voice. He sharply glared at me while trying to intimidate me.

「How much will the information be? Let's start from there」(gatekeeper)

…… He’s really used to it huh.
Well then, this is a conversation that wasn’t in the game. As you can expect, even Melissa wouldn’t know the market value of buying information. Besides, she’s still trembling behind my back.

Still, since she was so tightly stuck to me, I was able to enjoy the sensation of her ever-so soft fruits but—— Well, now’s not the time for that.

「Will 5000 Gold be good enough?」(Hitto)

「That ain’t even near enough」(gatekeeper)

Hearing that, he turned around and tried to head back. Damn, it was too cheap huh.

「Then make it 10,000. How about that?」(Hitto)

The gatekeeper’s movements sharply came to a halt. And just like that, he began walking back and returned to where we were before.

「Well, if it’s dat much then I’ll atleast hear ya out」(gatekeeper)

Phew, it seems to be enough for now.
And so I handed over 10,000 Gold, and the man began listening to me summarize the situation so far.
And afterwards I saw him stroking his chin while going “Fumu” until he opened his big mouth.

「Dat covered wagon, I’ve seen it」(gatekeeper)

「Really!? Well, how long ago was it? Was it heading to the slums?」(Hitto)

「…… Fer only 10,000 Gold I ain’t saying more den dis ya know」(gatekeeper)

Tsk! Damn greedy bastard. Since there was no way around it I handed him another 10,000 Gold.
Honestly, I was actually getting information so I should be paying for it, but it seems that this man can just never have enough.
Although, if I had to pay after hearing the info then I could somehow manage something by using Cancel.
But if he’s going to give out information piece by piece then it will be tough either way huh.

Well nonetheless, in this situation I'm the one who's in a disadvantageous position. I can't do anything if he's asking for pay in advance huh……

「Hehe, thank ya. Now let's see, those guys passed through dis gate 'bout 30 minutes ago. It was a group of three guys and… well, I'm pretty sure they were heading to the slums」(gatekeeper)

「I see. So they really were heading to the Thieves Guild, am I right?」(Hitto)

「……」(gatekeeper)

「——I already paid 10,000 you know」(Hitto)
「Unfortunately dat info is pretty expensive ta give out」(gatekeeper)
「I get it, stop dancing around it already. How much do you want?」(Hitto)
「Well, let's see… if I could have another 30,000 Gold then…」(gatekeeper)

30,000 huh…… It's annoying but I obediently paid up.

「Here, 30,000. So, how was it?」(Hitto)

「Ah, dat bunch definitely wasn't going to da Thieves Guild」(gatekeeper)

They didn't go? I raised my brow in confusing as I continued questioning.

「What do you mean they didn't go there? You can't be saying that they plan on using the wagon for themselves right?」(Hitto)

「Nah~ not like dat. I heard that bunch mumbling it, but they said that the commission percentages for 'that guy' were good. Ya see, the Thieves Guild's prices are real cheap. 'Cuz of dat, stolen goods usually go for only half da market price. So das why they say that it's better to have a Broker traffic goods for you and act as a middleman between the Thieves Guild. Dere's a rumor going round dat says that if you use that Broker then you can at 70% of the market price」(gatekeeper)

I see. The 20% difference is a pretty nice deal after all. Also it would definitely be better to have someone buy it at a higher price, but……

「This is a pretty simple question but, is it really okay if that 'Broker' or whatever does something like that? Normally, if the Guild heard about this sort of thing then wouldn't he be given some sort of 'punishment' or something?」(Hitto)

In any case, they would be forcefully making transactions on their own in spite of the Thieves Guild. You could say that it's the same as asking for a death wish.

「In the end dis is only some gossip, but the Broker and the Guild, It seems like dere's a guy who's an old friend of theirs that can somewhat speak for both of them. And it looks like the Broker gives a portion of the profits over to dat guy」(gatekeeper)

…… I see. Putting it differently, if you can entice a guy who has power alongside the Guild then you can conduct as much underhanded and reckless businesses as you want, huh.
As you would expect, the people at the Guild, if there was a way to somehow get your hands on the Guild's profits and use them to fatten your own personal wallets then they would be on the lookout for things like that.

「Also dat Broker won't do business in any transaction that's too cheap ya see. But if it's a wagon like dat then it would be plenty valuable enough to deal with」(gatekeeper)

「I see…… I pretty much get it. Well then, do you know where them thieving bastards are going to conduct the transaction?」(Hitto)

「……」(gatekeeper)

「*Sigh* Fine, here's another 10,000」(Hitto)
「Hehehe, thanks for your patronage!」(gatekeeper)

Hmm? For some reason, once he took the gold coin from me he suddenly started making a grinning smile that was different from before……

「Those guys always change the transaction location so I ain't really sure where they're gonna do it. But ya see, head past the gate and go towards the southern part of the slums. Once ya get there, look for a place with a red bearded hobo sleeping there. After that, head down the side of the back alley until you see a beaten up sign that says【Mysterious Drunkards】and head inside. It's a bar that deals with thieves, but look for a guy sitting by the wall with a Kiseru in his mouth and a plate for a head that looks like a Kappa. Tell that guy "Hello, nice weather today huh", and then he'll answer answer "Don't be stupid, it's gonna rain the rest of the day". If he says that the you'll know for sure that it's the right person your talking to. after that ask him if he's heard of a guy named Daimon

and he should know you came from me. By the way, Daimon would be my name」(Daimon)

He suddenly started talking nonstop so I was slightly taken aback.
But as expected of Melissa, even though she was so scared, as soon as she heard him start talking she brought out a notepad and began writing it down.
Amazing, isn't it.

「After that, ask that plated Kappa head "Where can we get tonight's dinner?" and once he hears that he'll tell you where the transaction is taking place. There's a system to know where they'll hold the transaction you see. If you hurry then I'd bet you'll be able to make the afternoon transaction. If you take when that bunch left the gate into account, with that timing then you'd be able to meet the seller. Ah, also you'll have to hand that Kappa a fee of 10,000 for the info」(Daimon)

「Ah, understood」(Hitto)

「Umu. Nah, but still, you sure are a decisive one huh. I like that! I said it just now but I'm Daimon, You are?」(Daimon)

…… Wait, my name should've been written in the description of my adventurer's certificate. Still, I don't really want to see this guy that often…… But even so.

「My name is Hitto. Thanks for the information」(Hitto)

「Naah, it's no problem at all. Well, as you can see I'm an expert when it comes to underground info. If ya want to know something then come ask me again」(Daimon)

「Uh, yea. I got it……」(Hitto)

This change in attitude is amazing huh. He was so discontent before but now he's all smiles. Well, that smile honestly had a bad sensation oozing from it though.
Or rather, seeing him like this I'm not sure what to say or do about it.

「Still, all things considered, you really have a good master huh. You're such a beauty that I bet this guy listens to your every desire. Be sure to woo him if you want some support, ya hear」(Daimon)

「Eh? ah, yes……」(Melissa)

Melissa sure looks perplexed huh. Well of course she is. Out of nowhere he said that to her with a creepy smile on his face.

…… But in reality if Melissa did try begging me like that then I would probably give in right away.

Well, I got the information I wanted nonetheless. I parted with Daimon and signaled to Melissa that we were going to leave the gate.
But still, that Daimon… Of course he wasn't a great guy, but he might be useful for various things.
I guess I should remember his name and face huh——